Letters on Baptism

Fairfield

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LETTERS ON BAPTISM

BY

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Congregat
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PREFACE.

THE first of these letters tells how they came to be written.

At the frequently expressed desire of the Christian friend to whom they were originally addressed, and also of others to whom most of them have been read, they are now given to the public.

Although some changes have been made in them, — chiefly in the way of a fuller discussion of a few points, — yet the original form and style of them have been retained. It is thought that he for whom they were first written is a fair representative of a pretty large class of persons who are reëxamining the foundation of their faith on this subject.

Addressed, as they were, to a warm personal friend, for whom the writer entertains the highest Christian regard, it is hoped that

nothing will be found in them to stir up any unkind feelings on the part of any of the writer's Baptist brethren, for whom he has only love and high esteem.

These letters are not published in any sectarian spirit. The writer makes no objection to his Baptist brethren practicing only immersion. He would be glad if they, in like manner, made no objection to his practicing something else. It is the purpose of what is here written to show that those who practice sprinkling, or pouring, are entirely obedient to both the spirit and letter of the divine command.

E. B. F.

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BAPTISM.

LETTER I.

MY DEAR FRIEND, — Your letter is before me, in which you say : "For many years you and I have been of the same belief on the subject of baptism ; I now learn that you have changed your views and your church relation. I doubt not that you have what seem to you to be good and sufficient reasons for this change, and as it is my sincere and honest desire to find the exact truth on all matters of Christian doctrine and duty, I wish you could find time to give me a full statement of those reasons."

To this request I am happy to respond ; but you will not expect me to be able to

do it in a few lines. It is a subject upon which I have spent many months of study; it will require several letters to set forth the reasons for giving up opinions which I had long held. If you have the patience to read all that I am willing to write, I feel sure that you will not only give me credit for honesty in my present position, but for having good and ample grounds for disavowing my former belief. I think you will see, indeed, that I could not honestly have done anything else.

You know, perhaps, that I have been a Baptist for more than a quarter of a century; and no man was more certain of being right. I had not a doubt on the subject.

How this change came about may be told in a few words. Some years ago, I was requested by a Baptist publishing house to prepare a book in defense of Baptist views. They proposed a volume

of about four hundred duodecimo pages. I accepted this appointment with the fullest assurance that an argument could be made in that compass that nobody could fairly answer. In order to do it I determined to go over the whole ground from the beginning; so that when the work was finished the honest and intelligent reader of my book would be constrained to admit that it was unassailable.

I fully believed that immersion was the only water baptism, and that it could be made so to appear to every candid inquirer.

My disappointment you can imagine when I tell you that, as I prosecuted my study of the subject, I found tower after tower of my Baptist fort tumbling down! Most laboriously did I strive to repair them. Month after month for more than two years did I labor to maintain my old ground, but to no avail. There were too

many hard and solid facts against me. Having studied the subject through and through on both sides, I was convinced of my error. *Immersion was not the only baptism.* The word *baptizo* did not mean "immerse" in the New Testament. I saw it clearly. I could not have been an honest man, and continue to profess to believe what I did not believe. I *had* believed it with strong conviction, and I do not for one moment question the honesty of my Baptist brethren. They are as sincere in their convictions as I formerly was in mine. But with the facts now before me it was impossible for me to remain a minister of the gospel in any Baptist denomination.

With your patience, I will set before you, as you request, my present views, and the reasons for them. You of course must weigh the evidence for yourself, and reach your own conclusions.

LETTER II.

COME at once to the main question: "What does the word *baptize* mean?"

The Baptist version substitutes the word "immerse" wherever it occurs: and that translation expresses the Baptist idea. If it expresses the mind of the Spirit, then it ought to be so translated. I used to think that it did: I am very certain now that it does not. The translators of our English Bible were wise in transferring the word; because, as I will show you, we had no one word in the English language to express the idea intended.

But what is the idea intended to be conveyed? This is the question at issue. And it is of no use to say that "as it is a mere matter of outward ceremony, it is not worth disputing about." Certainly it

is not worth while to cherish a disputatious spirit about anything: but if it were worth while for our Lord and Master to establish such an ordinance at all, it is worth our while to try to find out what he meant by it. Whatever Christ commands, be it something little or great, it is certainly worth our while to try to understand it, so that we may obey it.

So long as there is an honest and wide divergence of views among Christian people — so long as one of the largest Protestant denominations separate themselves from their brethren, on this ground alone — it is worth our while trying to find some method of removing the misunderstanding.

If our Baptist brethren are right in maintaining that baptism is immersion, and nothing else, then the rest of us are wrong. If we are right, they are wrong. And I assume that we all alike desire to

be right in our understanding of just what Christ requires. In your letter to me you say: "I want to find the truth: nothing else will do anybody any good." I believe you, and agree with you. Again you say: "I have learned some things every year; I am not beyond learning more." This is certainly the only proper ground for any Christian to stand upon.

Now the question at issue between us turns, and must turn, mainly, if not entirely, upon *the meaning of the word itself* which is used in the Great Commission. That Commission I do not *need* to quote to you; but it is worth the time that I take to write it, and that it will take you to read it, to have it distinctly before us. Here it is: "Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you" (Matt. 28: 19, 20).

If the word "baptizing," found in this Commission, was understood by Christ to mean "immersing," then the minister of the gospel cannot execute it by sprinkling. If the word means "sprinkling," then it could not be fulfilled by immersing. But suppose now it should be found that this word "baptizing" conveys the general idea of "ceremonial cleansing, or ritual purification, by water," then possibly the requirement may be fully met by either immersion, pouring, or sprinkling. In that case, the Baptist theory falls to the ground. If it is a word of particular mode, then that particular mode alone can satisfy the command. If, on the other hand, it is a term of general import, then the question of mode does not enter into the substance of the command at all; and it is left to the administrator, or the person to be baptized, to choose the particular mode according to his best judgment.

To make my meaning clear to every one, let me illustrate from the Commission itself. Here are four words of command: (1) "Go"; (2) "Disciple," or "Make disciples of"; (3) "Baptize"; (4) "Teach."

Take the first. "Go" is evidently a word of general import; not a word of particular mode. If a commanding officer in giving orders to a soldier bids him "walk" to a certain place, for the soldier to "ride" would not be obedience. If he orders him to "go on horseback," making the trip in a carriage would not be compliance. But if he commands him simply to "go," the soldier is at liberty to consult his own judgment as to the most fitting method of accomplishing the distance, unless there is something else to indicate the manner of his going; as, for example, there might be a general standing order that all soldiers of a certain class should uniformly go in a certain way.

Take the second: "Disciple," or "Make disciples of." I quote the new version, because in the old version two entirely different words in the Greek are translated by the same word "teach." The new version translates the former as above —"Make disciples of." It might have used the word "evangelize," transferring the Greek word, and expressing the same idea. Either of these forms of expression is of general import. In obedience to the command, the Christian Church may send out preachers, establish colleges, organize Sunday-schools, instruct the young, build houses of worship, preach in the marketplace, visit from house to house, sing gospel hymns, or do anything else that may be adapted to accomplish the work of converting the world. They are not limited to any particular mode of operation in evangelizing the nations.

Take the fourth: "Teaching." This

too is a word of general import. In carrying out the commission to teach the people to observe all the things commanded, we may do it orally or we may do it by the printed page. We may circulate Bibles or publish tracts or send out religious books or Christian newspapers. We may teach them privately or publicly, in any and every way as may seem best.

Of the four words of command in this Great Commission three are general. The missionary may go into all the world as best he can — on a sailing vessel, on a steamship, on railroad cars, by stage coach, horseback, or on foot, as seems to him good; and he may adopt the means that shall seem best to him for discipling and instructing the nations (unless elsewhere forbidden) because the words are broad enough to cover them all.

The third word of command in this Commission is "baptize." Is this also a

word of general import? or is it one of specific mode?

THIS IS THE QUESTION BEFORE US; and it is one to be settled, not by prejudice, but by sound judgment. That the other three words are of general signification weighs nothing, of course, to prove that this is. I have only taken these others as illustrations to bring the issue clearly before us. Whether this third word of command is one of general import or of specific mode is to be settled by careful, candid, and thorough examination. I used to think that it was the latter. After most laborious research, in spite of the beliefs of twenty-five years to combat, I am sure that it is not.

It neither means to immerse nor to sprinkle nor to pour upon. It conveys in its ritual use the general idea OF CEREMONIAL PURIFICATION BY WATER — including all these methods, but limited to none

of them. No one English word expresses it; and it was, therefore, wise and necessary to transfer the word from the Greek to the English. You have told me that you were "not a Greek scholar, knowing little more than the Greek alphabet;" and have requested that in these letters I should spell out in English characters the Greek words which it might be necessary or convenient to introduce. This I shall be happy to do. I begin with the word *baptizein* — to baptize. You notice that our English spelling of the infinitive simply drops the last two letters of the Greek. Were you to look for the word in a Greek lexicon you would find it given *baptizo* — I baptize. Maybe, before my next letter, you may interest yourself in looking it up.

LETTER III.

I SEE that you have adopted my suggestion, and so in your last letter you say: "I find that the word *baptizo* is defined as meaning in classic Greek, 'Dip, plunge, immerse,' etc. If so, how can you be justified in your interpretation of what it means in the New Testament?"

I proceed at once to answer. Even admitting that the Greek lexicon which you have consulted defines correctly the *classic* usage of *baptizo* (that is a question which I will consider hereafter), this does not by any means settle the other question as to its usage in the New Testament. Very many words employed in the Greek Testament are used in a sense very much modified from that which they bear

in classic Greek. This you will readily see must be so from the necessities of the case. Words are the signs of ideas: and when you wish to convey to anyone a new idea, for which his own language has no word exactly fitted, you are obliged to invent an entirely new word, or to use such words as his language affords, in a modified sense. Hence it will be found that there is not a distinctively Christian conception in the New Testament which does not need to give expression to itself through some word of classic Greek *more or less changed* from its classic meaning. *Theos* (God), *Christos* (Christ), *metanoia* (repentance), *agape* (love), *elpis* (hope), *pistis* (faith), *hamartia* (sin), *sarx* (flesh), *ouranos* (heaven) — how different are the ideas conveyed by these words to the Christian reader of the New Testament from any which they ever conveyed to the readers of Homer, Xenophon, or Thucydides!

Deipnon (supper) expressed to the mind of Plato a very different thought from that which Paul had when he spoke of the Lord's Supper. To the Greek this word was the name for "the full meal of the day," whenever taken. Who knows but that the Corinthians made this mistake of assuming that the word was used in its classic sense, and so fell to eating and drinking, — almost to surfeiting, — until Paul found it necessary to rebuke them, and to explain to them the nature of the ordinance? (See 1 Cor. 11 : 20–30.)

The classic meaning of no word is an absolute guide to its signification in the New Testament. Whenever any distinctively Christian or ecclesiastic idea is to be expressed, the Greek word will be found used in a modified sense.

The experience of all modern missionaries to heathen lands illustrates the same law. Before they can preach to the people

in their native tongue they find it necessary to explain to them that the words employed are used in a different sense from that to which they have been accustomed. So, also, in translating the Scriptures. As one of the ablest of our American missionaries said to me a few years ago: "The language of all these nations needs to be converted as much as the people."

If, then, we admit, for the sake of argument, that *baptizo* in the Greek always means immerse, it still remains an open question whether its religious sense is the same or not.

Suppose it were necessary to employ some word to express the idea of "ceremonious religious cleansing in the use of water," and no word was found in classic Greek exactly expressing that idea, what is to be done? Just what was done in numberless other cases: SOME WORD MUST BE CONVERTED TO THAT USE.

Would it not be entirely in harmony with well-known laws of language to seize upon *baptizo* for that purpose?

Here is a word meaning to IMMERSE, to ENVELOP. One of the methods of *cleaning* is by immersing in pure water. This word is therefore laid hold upon to express THE GENERAL IDEA OF CEREMONIAL CLEANSING WITH WATER. Certainly in this there would be no violence done to the well-known laws of human speech. For exactly that sort of thing was done, long before the times of Christ, in the case of another Greek verb closely related to *baptizo*. I refer to BAPTO. This word originally meant to dip, or immerse, somewhat the same as *baptizo*, as the dictionaries represent it. But as dipping or immersion was one method of coloring, or dyeing, it came to be used to mean color, or dye, without any reference to mode whatever.

I know this point has been disputed by Alexander Campbell and some other zealous immersionists. But the facts are so palpable as to compel the ablest of all the Baptist writers — Dr. Alexander Carson — to yield it entirely; and so he says: "Although this meaning arose from dyeing by dipping, yet the word has come by appropriation to denote dyeing without reference to mode. . . . Nothing in the history of words is more common than to enlarge or diminish their signification. In this way *bapto*, from signifying mere mode, came to be applied to a certain operation, usually performed in that mode. From signifying to dip, it came to signify to dye by dipping, and afterwards to denote dyeing in any manner. A like process might be shown in the history of a thousand other words."[1]

[1] Carson on Baptism: edition of American Baptist Publication Society, p. 44.

The examples in which this meaning occurs are such as fully to justify the conclusion to which Dr. Carson comes.

Thus Hippocrates, speaking of a coloring fluid, says: "When it drops upon the garments, they are *dyed*."

So Nearchus relates that the Indians *dye* their beards; and Ælian speaks of an old coxcomb who attempted to conceal his age by *dyeing* his hair.

Æschylus speaks of a garment *dyed* by the sword of Ægisthus.

Homer, in the battle of the frogs and mice, relates that *Crombophagus* — so Cowper names this warrior — "fell and breathed no more, and the lake was *dyed* with blood."

Alexander Campbell, Dr. Gale, of England, and other Baptist writers even here insist that the lake was "dipped by hyperbole." "The literal sense is," says Dr. Gale, "the lake was dipped in blood." To which Dr. Carson replies: "Never

was such a figure. . . . What a monstrous paradox in rhetoric is the figure of the dipping of a lake in the blood of a mouse! . . . The lake is said to be dyed, not dipped nor poured nor sprinkled. *There is in the word no reference to mode.*[1]

What now would be more natural than that *baptizo*, meaning originally to immerse, should come to be used in a secondary sense to convey the idea of cleansing, or purifying without reference to mode?

Of course this argument does not prove that as a matter of fact it did undergo any transition of that sort. That proof is to be submitted hereafter. For the present I am only endeavoring to show that such a change would do no violence to the laws of language. In the words of Dr. Carson, already quoted: "A like process might be shown in the history of a thousand other words."

[1] Ibid. p. 48.

LETTER IV.

I TRUST I have made it plain in my last letter that such a modification of meaning as I claim in the case of *baptizo* would not have been unnatural or improbable, but altogether in harmony with the well-known laws of human speech.

Before coming to the positive proof that just such a change did actually occur, I wish to show you beyond all question that the exigencies of every passage of Scripture in which baptism is commanded absolutely require *some modification* of the classical meaning, as it is held to be by all Baptist authorities. This can be made entirely clear from the Baptist translation itself. Take the Commission as it reads in the version published by the Baptist

Union: "Go, therefore, and disciple all the nations, immersing them in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit."

Or take the answer which Peter is represented to have made on the day of Pentecost to those inquiring what they should do to be saved: "Repent, and be each of you immersed."

Suppose the inquirer had said: "Immerse? *into what?*"

Does the classic *baptizo* answer this question? Not at all! Whether the immersion is to be in salt water or fresh, in running water or still, in clean water, or oil, or vinegar, or into filth, there is nothing in the English word immerse, and there is nothing in the classic *baptizo*, to decide or even to suggest. What the effect of the immersion is to be, whether to render clean or unclean, there is absolutely nothing in the classic *baptizo* to indicate.

I have before me a volume published by the American Bible Union (Baptist) for the purpose of vindicating their translation of *baptizo* by "immerse"; a volume in which they profess to give all the passages in Greek literature in which the word occurs; and so far as I know it is complete and exact.

Now what do I find in the examination of these passages, numbering in all a little more than one hundred and fifty? I find that twenty times it was used of a ship that was going to the bottom of the sea; eighteen times of one sinking or drowned as the result of his immersion; nineteen times of dipping into oil; six times of plunging something, as a sword, into the human body; of land overflowed by water twice; of the difficulty of sinking things into very salt water, four times; of dipping into milk, vinegar, wine, honey, wax, fire, ointment, etc., twenty times.

Besides these, about seventy examples are given of its figurative use of being sunken, or overwhelmed in cares, debts, ignorance, sleep, passion, drunkenness, taxes, crimes, vices, sorrows, afflictions, calamities, punishments, difficulties, etc.; *every time in a bad sense.*

Now, as these are all the examples of the word *baptizo* which these learned gentlemen of the Baptist Union have been able to find in all the classic Greek literature which has come down to our day, they may reasonably be presumed to represent pretty fairly the general usage of the classic Greek. At all events, they are the sole basis upon which the dictionaries of the Greek language have been made.

Do any of these illustrate the usage of the word as found in the Greek Testament, in connection with the ordinance of baptism? Do they give any hint of the spiritual significance of the Christian rite?

Do they suggest clearly any answer to the question, "Into what must this immersion which the Baptist translation commands take place?"

Nothing is said in the Great Commission about water — nothing, according to their translation, is implied. The classic usage of *baptizo* does not imply water. As Dr. Carson himself is clear-headed enough to see, and candid enough to say: "*The idea of water is not in the word at all.*" YET THE WORD ITSELF IS ALL THAT IS FOUND IN THE GREAT COMMISSION! The word itself is all that is found in Peter's answer on the day of Pentecost.

Every minister of Christ is commanded (according to this Baptist translation) to "immerse" disciples. And for one I am entirely willing to admit that we probably have no one word that better translates the *classic baptizo* than the word immerse. Not that the *act* of immersion is expressed

by it, so much as the condition of being surrounded by anything, whether liquid or solid. But not having any one word to express its classic meaning any better than immerse, with this general explanation, I am willing to admit that the Baptist translation is a good translation of the classic word *baptizo*. But what I maintain is that the classic *baptizo* does not at all meet the demands of the Christian ordinance; nor does the translation of the Baptist Union; for the very reason which Dr. Carson has acknowledged, that there is no water at all in the word itself. The thing into which the immersion is to take place must, in classic usage, be expressed; for the word does not imply it.

I want to make this so plain that there can be no possible questioning it. Suppose a Grecian gentleman in the days of Plato, for example, had called one of his servants, and telling him that he would

find a piece of cloth in a certain place, had simply bidden him immerse it (using the word *baptizo* in its proper mood, tense, number, and person), would the servant have known anything about what he was to do with it?

Had that servant been familiar with every passage in Greek literature now known to us, he would have been in utter ignorance of the thing required; and he would have waited for the finishing of his master's sentence; and unless the master had intended to mock the servant, he would have proceeded to finish the sentence without delay. For without something further the servant could not have known whether the cloth was to be immersed in fresh water or salt; in warm water or cold; in honey or oil; in vinegar or wine; in ointment or milk. "There is no water in the word at all" is a true saying *when the remark is confined to the classic usage.*

Pressed by this logic, which years ago I found clinging to me, I said to myself: "Very well; the disciple must be immersed in something; the command does not say what. Water is ordinarily the most convenient thing; and as nothing is said about it, I am at liberty to choose. But these disciples must be buried in something; and if I were in a desert with plenty of sand and little water I would bury them in the sand, covering the face last of all, and uncovering it again as promptly as possible; so that they should always be able to understand that passage — "buried with him by baptism"; and that other that speaks about being "planted together in the likeness of his death." And I found various other Baptist ministers who occupied the same ground.

I cannot now see the fallacy of my argument, assuming that the classic *bap-*

tizo must determine for me the meaning of the command. Or, if we take the significance of the ordinance, as almost all Baptist writers insist upon giving it to us, — Campbell, Carson, Ripley, Hinton, and others, — that the ordinance was intended to represent Christ's burial and resurrection, and to be a symbolic pledge of our own resurrection after death, then the person must go under and come out again. And something else besides water might answer for that.

I could not, however, stand very firmly in this conclusion when I had reached it; for I found too many allusions to baptism — such as, "having your bodies washed with pure water" — to rest in the result to which I had come, that there was no water necessary to Christian baptism. There is none in the *classic baptizo* — that is plain.

If it be said that we find the water

not in the word, but in the history and incidental allusions, I reply that this would answer, if the water were merely an unimportant incident. But here is a prominent command, with the most important part of it omitted from the law itself, and left merely to inference. I know of no other case in which such a thing has been done. If it is done here, it is an anomaly.

We have no instance in the Bible in which the word immerse is used. So I cannot illustrate by that particular term. But the word "dip" we have; and this is preferred by some of the Baptist writers as the equivalent term of *baptizo;* and we can see by reference to the cases in which it is used how entirely essential it is to make mention of that into which the dipping is to take place.

For example, we are told in Genesis 37:31 that Joseph's brethren dipped his

coat in the blood of a kid. Elsewhere we are informed that Aaron dipped his finger in the blood of the calf, and put it upon the horns of the altar. Of Asher it is said, "Let him dip his foot in oil." The feet of the priests were dipped in the brim of the water. Jonathan put forth the end of the rod that was in his hand and dipped it in a honeycomb. Of about twenty instances in the Bible in which the word "dip" is used, only three of them refer to dipping into water; and all the passages would be entirely blind and without meaning were no mention made of the substance into which the dipping or immersion took place.

The same thing would be found true in the various passages in which the word "sprinkle" is found. Sometimes it is the sprinkling of water, sometimes blood, sometimes ashes, sometimes dust.

Nearly all the passages containing

either of these words are simple narrative: and every one of them would be obscure if the verb stood alone. And does not a positive command need to be made as plain as an historic narrative? Do we expect a material point — the material point — to be omitted?

The water in baptism is either essential or it is not. If it is not, the classic *baptizo* will answer. If it is, *baptizo* in its classic sense utterly fails to meet the exigencies of the Christian ordinance. No water is mentioned in the Great Commission, and *baptizo*, in its usage in the one hundred and fifty passages of classic literature that have come down to us, is found to imply none. It is used of all sorts of substances, liquid and solid alike.

But now, assuming that the word expresses *in itself*, as used in the Scriptures, the idea of "ceremonial cleansing, or ritual purification, by water," all is

plain. On this supposition there is water enough in the command. The classic *baptizo* does not give us a drop. That means immerse, dip, or plunge, with no reference whatever to the material, or to any cleansing result that may be produced.

I see no escape from this argument. Were there no other evidence of a variation from classic usage, the absolute exigencies of those passages commanding baptism would be sufficient to prove it. No WORD OF SPECIFIC MODE MERELY can possibly fulfill the demand of these passages. If we try "Repent, and be sprinkled," the incompleteness and the obscurity resulting are just the same as from the translation of the Baptist Union —"Repent, and be immersed." Sprinkled with what? would remain an unanswered question.

The word *baptizo must* be understood

to express some general idea of effect, and not merely of mode. Upon the supposition that it was used in a sacred sense to denote a ceremony of religious cleansing and consecration, everything is plain.

But is there any proof that it was so used and understood by those to whom the New Testament was given? To that point I shall come in my next letter.

LETTER V.

IN your letter in reply to my last you say: "If, as you state, and as Dr. Carson affirms, and as you seem satisfactorily to prove, the classic *baptizo* carries in its own intrinsic meaning no water, how do you account for such a definition of the word as my Greek lexicon gives? It is thus defined: 'BAPTIZO: to dip, plunge, or immerse in water.'"

I answer that such a definition is a mere matter of carelessness on the part of the lexicographer. I have in my library the lexicon from which you quote: and I have also half a dozen others which define the word more exactly. I do not doubt that the lexicographer to whom you refer would, upon cross-examination, immediately correct himself.

An exact definition may always be substituted for the word itself; but this definition will bear no such test. Were you a teacher of Greek, as you are of English, and were a boy to translate a sentence from his Greek reader thus: "The ship, being immersed in water in the sea, soon sank to the bottom," you would say to him, "In the sea? Where do you get that?" "From the text, *en thalasso.*" "Very well. 'Being immersed in water' — where do you get that?" "From *baptizomenos:* the dictionary tells me that *baptizo* means immerse in water." "But is there not water enough 'in the sea' for immersing a ship? Why do you compel *baptizomenos* to furnish you any more? Is it not very bad rhetoric to say 'being immersed in water in the sea'?" "Yes; but that is not my fault; I translate according to the dictionary!"

Were you as competent a teacher of

Greek as you are of English, you would say to the student: "Dictionaries sometimes make mistakes; the men who make them are sometimes careless. The dictionary should have defined *baptizo* something like this: 'To dip, plunge, or immerse; for example, in water, oil, vinegar, or something else, as the case may be.' Neither the water, oil, nor vinegar is any part of the definition of the verb: the water no more than the oil or the vinegar."

The student, possibly, would not be entirely satisfied with your teaching; for a boy in the Greek reader is very apt to be suspicious of a teacher who disputes the dictionary. So you wait, until three days after there is another sentence, which he translates thus: "The man dipped the spoon in the melted wax;" and you say to him: "Why do you not translate, 'He dipped the spoon in water

in the melted wax'?" "Because that would be absurd." "True; but does not the dictionary say that *baptizo* means to dip in water? You did not get any water into your translation — nothing but melted wax!" The student by this time discovers that the dictionary is at fault. And you go on to say to him: "You will find that whenever in classic Greek you meet *baptizo* in any of its voices, moods, or tenses; in any of its forms of number or person, the word itself carries neither water nor oil nor vinegar: but you will find that the thing into which the dipping, plunging, or immersion takes place is distinctly expressed, or so implied in the context, that it is equivalent to expressing it. Whether it be the sea or a lake; ointment or oil; milk or molasses, — it will be found to be stated. The verb itself implies nothing whatever as to that."

Perhaps you will take occasion to say to

the young student also another thing, and that is that dictionaries are not the highest authority as to the meaning of words: there is always an appeal to actual usage as the court of final resort.

Some dictionary makers are very exact in definitions. As a teacher of English you have found Webster to be one of the very best in this regard. And if you will turn now to this definition of the word "immerse," you will notice the contrast between his accuracy and the loose inexactness of your Greek dictionary in defining *baptizo*. Here is his definition of IMMERSE: "To plunge into anything that surrounds or covers, especially into a fluid; to dip; to sink; to bury; to overwhelm." No mention of water particularly as a part of the definition: "Anything that surrounds, or covers." One sinking in a quagmire; or buried in melted lava; or plunged into filth; or

dipped in water, — all alike are immersed. And this is the word, you will remember, which is chosen by the Baptist Union to express the ordinance of baptism. "Repent and be immersed, every one of you." Now there is no more water in "immerse" than in the classic *baptizo:* and if the use of pure water is implied in Christian baptism, then this translation fails to give it to us; but if the word *baptizo* in connection with the Christian ordinance has the signification of "ceremonial cleansing in the use of water," then all is plain and easy.

What is the matter of historic fact? Had this word at the time of Christ taken on any such secondary meaning; and is it used in the New Testament in any such sense?

My first appeal is to the Septuagint: and I think it can be shown most conclusively that the word *baptizo* was under-

stood by the Jews at the time of Christ, and had been so understood for a long time before, to convey the idea of ceremonial cleansing in the use of water, whether it was applied by sprinkling, pouring, or immersion.

You will not need to be reminded that the Greek translation of the old Testament Scriptures known as the Septuagint was made from one hundred and thirty to three hundred years before Christ: that the Apocryphal books, generally bound up with the rest in the Septuagint, are of unquestioned antiquity, at least as old as the dates above given; that although these books may not be regarded as canonical, yet some of them have been highly esteemed; and whether so or not, they illustrate the usage of words among the Jews none the less.

The word *baptizo* is found three times in the Septuagint in its literal sense;

once figuratively. The first case of its occurrence is in 2 Kings 5 : 14 and is familiar. Here the word is used of Naaman's cleansing himself in the Jordan for the cure of his leprosy.

In the Hebrew the word is *tawbal*, which ordinarily means to "dip," or "immerse," without question. Gesenius, Buxtorph, and Fuerstio give no other definition. Others give also "cleanse" or "wash."

But even if we admit that it never means anything but dip, plunge, or immerse, it matters not, because *it is not at all with the Hebrew word* that we have to do. And this must be distinctly borne in mind. Baptist writers have often seemed to overlook that fact and assume that because the Septuagint uses the word *baptizo* it must be, of course, that it is the exact equivalent of the Hebrew word *tawbal*. This is a mistaken assumption,

as we shall see. We have only to do with the Greek word which the Seventy have employed in translating it. This word, as you know, is *baptizo.*

What these translators meant to express by it may be better understood by observing carefully all the various cases in which *tawbal* is found in the Hebrew, and the different ways in which they have rendered it. It is used sixteen times in the Hebrew Scriptures. Fourteen times it is translated into the Greek by *bapto*, once by *moluno*, once by *baptizo.*

Was this a mere matter of accident? If not, why did they make such a difference?

The answer to this question may throw light on the whole subject. Already this word *baptizo* had come to be used in a peculiar sense — a religious sense — to signify water cleansing, and not merely to express the mode of it by dipping or

immersion. In the case of Naaman, the main thing was the cleansing — not merely the cure of the leprosy, but the ceremonial cleansing; and as it was wrought by miracle, by the command of a prophet of the Lord, the Seventy thought it more fitting to use *baptizo* than *bapto*. It was not simply the healing of a repulsive disease, it was cleansing from a disease which symbolized sin — which shut him who had it from the congregation of religious worshipers. It was, in a certain sense, and a very important sense, expressive of ritual purification.

When Joseph's brethren dipped his coat in the blood of the kid, some other word must be used. The Seventy recoiled from employing *baptizo*.

Dipping the bread in vinegar, dipping a rod in the honeycomb, dipping the feet in water or oil, or in the blood of one's enemies, — even Aaron's dipping his finger

in the blood of the calf, — in all these cases *bapto* is employed; for although Aaron's dipping his finger in the blood was part of a religious service, yet there was no religious cleansing of his finger or of his person at all suggested.

But when Naaman, in obedience to the word of the prophet, and for his cleansing from a disease which made him who had it unfit for religious service, dipped himself in the Jordan, *baptizo* might be used. And then it was used, not to express the dipping, but *the resultant cleansing*. This is made obvious by the only other case in which they translated the Hebrew word *tawbal* by any other word than *bapto*. That instance is found in Genesis 37 : 31 : "And they took Joseph's coat, and killed a kid of the goats, and dipped the coat in the blood." Here the Seventy have translated by *moluno*, which means, not "to dip," but "to defile."

Our translators — translating directly from the Hebrew — have given us two words which accurately represent *tawbal:* — "dip" and "plunge." The Seventy have given us three, two of which represent their own ideas of the effects in the two cases; and if any one should be called to the work of translating the Septuagint into English, he would never for a moment dream of translating *moluno* by anything else than "defile." That the Hebrew original meant "dip" or "plunge" would make no difference. It would constitute no argument to prove that *moluno* was understood by the Seventy to mean "plunge." So the use of *baptizo* in the other example is no proof that they understood that word to mean "dip" or "immerse." In the fourteen instances where they wish to say "dip," without implying either cleansing or pollution, they translate by *bapto.* In one case

implying defilement they used a word which means "defile"; in the one implying cleansing, they used a word which they understood to mean "cleanse." We cannot believe that they translated the same Hebrew word fourteen times by *bapto* and once by *baptizo*, by mere chance and without a reason. When the dipping expressed by *tawbal* implied defilement, they used *moluno* to express defilement. In doing so it may be said that they mistook their proper office as translators. I think they did; but that fact does not weaken the force of my argument; it gives strength to it. They were men of learning in the Greek. They knew that *tawbal* did not mean "defile," but simply "dip," as we have it in our translation. But the effect of dipping Joseph's coat into blood was defilement. Wishing to give expression to that effect they used *moluno*.

One other instance they found in which the dipping expressed by *tawbal* resulted in cleansing: they knew that *tawbal* did not mean to cleanse; but wishing to give expression to that effect, they employed, not *bapto*, which was the proper word for translating *tawbal* — but *baptizo*, which meant "cleanse," just as *moluno* meant defile.

They knew that *baptizo* was understood by the Jews to mean "cleanse," and for that reason, and for no other, they used it in this one solitary case.

This understanding of the matter makes everything plain and intelligible. They did not use *bapto* fourteen times, and then use *baptizo* once, because it meant the same thing as *bapto* (as Baptist writers generally maintain) but *because it did* NOT *mean the same thing.* Had they employed the two words *bapto* and *baptizo* indiscriminately — sometimes one and sometimes the other, by mere chance —

for translating the Hebrew *tawbal*, then there would be reason in the Baptist argument. But they did not use the two words indiscriminately. They used *bapto everywhere to express simply dipping or immersion.* The solitary instance in which the dipping resulted in ceremonial cleansing was that of Naaman: and in that case, and that only, they used *baptizo* to express the cleansing. No other explanation of their use of it explains anything, but simply darkens counsel by words without knowledge.

Were this the only instance of the use of *baptizo*, it would be wellnigh impossible to avoid the sure conviction that at the time of this translation (say, about two hundred years before Christ) *baptizo* was as well understood to express the idea of ritual purification by water, as *moluno* was understood to express the idea of defilement.

But this is not the only case nor by any means the strongest to prove that *baptizo* was understood in this sense. Other examples will be given in my next letter.

LETTER VI.

IN reply to my fifth letter you say: "I have still two difficulties in reference to your explanation of the passage referring to Naaman:— (1) To translate *baptizo* by the word 'cleanse' makes the Septuagint to say that Naaman '*cleansed himself seven times*' in the Jordan. Now I can understand how dipping himself seven times, at the command of the prophet, should result in his being cleansed; but was he cleansed seven times? (2) Admitting that the word means 'cleanse,' the cleansing was by dipping, was it not? If so, how that could help me in reaching the conclusion that ritual purification might be attained by sprinkling or pouring, I cannot see."

Your statement of these difficulties is both clear and concise. I shall try to meet them fully.

First, as to the sevenfold cleansing, let me say three things:—

(1) There is no greater difficulty in conceiving of *cleansing* a thing seven times than of *washing* it seven times; and just that was what Naaman was ordered to do by the prophet. Washing is not simply wetting. To wash a garment is to make it clean. Were I to quote the various passages in which the same word (*raw-chats*) that is here translated "wash" is found, it would be evident that it is substantially a synonym of "cleanse." Many of our Baptist brethren have the impression that Naaman *was commanded by the prophet* to DIP himself seven times in the Jordan. This is a mistake; he was directed *to wash seven times:* in other words, to cleanse himself seven times.

(2) "Seven" being a common Hebrew symbol of completeness, to cleanse a thing seven times is, in Hebrew phraseology, to *thoroughly* cleanse it.

(3) The usage of other passages abundantly justifies the Seventy in supposing that a Jew might, without violating any law of Hebrew usage, speak of Naaman cleansing himself seven times: as, for example, Psalm 12:6:—"The words of the Lord are pure words. . . . *purified seven times.*"

These remarks, I think, will fully meet your first difficulty.

As to your second question I may say that thus far I have only mentioned one of the instances in which the word *baptizo* is used in the Septuagint. The others I am to give in their regular order. In the case of Naaman I have no doubt that his mode of cleansing was by dipping himself in the Jordan, for the use of the

Hebrew word *tawbal* determines this. But this does not prove at all that the Greek word used by the Seventy meant "dip"; this I have endeavored to show was not the case. That word meant simply to express the general fact that he cleansed himself as he had been told to do. He was not commanded to dip himself, as we have seen; but he was not forbidden to do so, and he chose his own mode of performing the water cleansing which had been required of him as the condition of his recovery.

The very next instance to which I call your attention is one in which the cleansing was in some other manner than by dipping. It is found in the book of Judith, and shows conclusively that the word *baptizo* was used to express the general idea of ritual purification, and that, too, in a case where immersion is excluded with wellnigh absolute certainty.

Allow me briefly to recapitulate the circumstances as they are given in this book — which is properly placed in the Apocrypha, but which was written, as generally understood, about two hundred years before Christ; and whether the book is historical or fictitious makes no difference in illustrating the use of the word *baptizo.*

As the story runs, there was a war between the Assyrians and the Medes. Holofernes was the commander-in-chief of the Assyrian army, and led them forth to a war of conquest determined to compel all to submit to Nebuchadnezzar, the Assyrian king, and even to render him divine worship. In his progress he approached the land of Israel. The Jews prepared to resist him. They were in Bethulia and were rapidly coming into great distress.

Judith, a Jewish widow, planned de-

liverance for her country by a piece of superb strategy. Making herself as attractive as possible by reason of her personal beauty and her splendid attire, she went with her maid to the camp of Holofernes, pretending to take refuge there against the certain destruction which was speedily to overtake her people. In reality she had gone to the camp of the Assyrians for the purpose of getting Holofernes intoxicated and of taking his life, and so raising the siege and delivering her country.

So well did she play her part that the king was deceived by "her beauty of face and wisdom of words," and a tent was assigned to her and her maid. She remained in the camp three days, and having obtained permission to go out for prayer she went forth by night into the valley of Bethulia and *purified* herself (*ebaptizeto*) in the camp at the fountain of

water. And entering in *pure* (*katharɑ*) she remained in the tent till one brought her food in the evening. (Judith 12:6, 7, 9.)

This was evidently in form a religious purification. It was in the camp. It was under the eye of the guard. It was at a "fountain" (*pēgē*) — "a spring" — not a lake. She purified herself *at* the fountain, not *in* it. The Greek preposition is *epi*. It was, I repeat, within the camp. It was not a natural place for immersion. No lady would have been at all likely to immerse herself in such a place, even had there been facilities for it, which is not at all probable (though one Baptist writer, in his zeal for his theory, suggests that she might have found a horse-trough large enough for the purpose).

"But why should she leave her tent for a purification other than immersion; and why at night?" To this objection several answers may be made.

First, it may be said that as a Jewess, accustomed to the use of running water in all ritual cleansing, she would naturally choose water which had not gone through any uncircumcised hands, and which had not in any ceremonial way become unclean. This she could find only at the fountain itself.

Secondly, it may be said that she had her own special reasons for this walk to the fountain at night. She had laid a deep plot. Before she got through with it she intended to get into her possession the head of the Assyrian general and to carry it back with her to the besieged city. So she went forth night after night, and returned again, until all suspicion had been allayed and the opportune moment had come. It was not till the fourth night that she could accomplish her mission and return with the head of Holofernes.

Reasons enough may be suggested for her going to the fountain, and going at night, without adopting the utterly improbable theory that it was for the purpose of immersion — a theory supported only by the assumption that the word *baptizo* means immerse and nothing else. Understanding it to express the general idea of ceremonial purification by water, all is easy.

It might be added that as the professed purpose of her going to the fountain was for religious purification, and as the purification of the Jews was almost always by sprinkling, it is not at all probable that she would immerse herself, even could she have done so with perfect facility. But this would be to anticipate what will be said more fully hereafter.

The only remaining instance in which *baptizo* is found in the Septuagint (except once in a figurative sense) occurs

in "Ecclesiasticus, or Son of Sirach," 34: 25, and when properly studied is itself enough to settle the whole controversy. Your special attention is invited to this case, for if I am correct in my interpretation it IS ABSOLUTELY CONCLUSIVE.

The passage is this: "He that is *purified* (*baptizomenos*) from a dead body, and touches it again, what does his *cleansing* profit him?"

We may safely assume that the author of this book understood the process of ceremonial cleansing to which he refers, and that he had in mind the process required by the law of Moses. That law is laid down in the nineteenth chapter of Numbers. And the only and entire process of cleansing required was that the ashes of the burnt heifer should be put into a vessel, running water should be put thereto, and this water should be SPRINKLED upon him with a bunch of

hyssop in the hands of a clean person. NOTHING MORE WHATEVER.[1]

And so it is said (Num. 19:13) that he who neglects to be thus purified from the touch of a dead body shall be cut off from his people; "because the water of separation WAS NOT SPRINKLED UPON HIM, he shall be unclean."[2]

So again in the 20th verse: "The man that shall be unclean, and shall not purify himself, that soul shall be cut off from among the congregation, because he hath defiled the sanctuary of the Lord; the water of separation HATH

[1] Whosoever in the open field toucheth one that is slain with a sword, or a dead body, or a bone of a man, or a grave, shall be unclean seven days. And for the unclean they shall take of the ashes of the burnt heifer of purification of sin, and running water shall be put thereto in a vessel: and a clean person shall take hyssop, and dip it in the water, and sprinkle it upon him that touched the bone, or the slain, or the dead, or the grave: and the clean person shall sprinkle upon the unclean on the third day, and on the seventh day. Num. 19:16–19.

[2] Whosoever toucheth the dead body of any man that is dead, and purifieth not himself, defileth the tabernacle of the Lord; and that soul shall be cut off from Israel: because the water of separation was not sprinkled upon him, he shall be unclean. Num. 19:13.

NOT BEEN SPRINKLED UPON HIM: he is unclean."

So, also, it is that the writer to the Hebrews says, in allusion to this law: "For if the ashes of a heifer, SPRINKLING THE UNCLEAN, *sanctifieth* to the *purifying* of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" (Heb. 9:13, 14.)

In like manner he speaks of having "our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience." (Heb. 10:22.)

THE ENTIRE PROCESS OF CLEANSING FROM A DEAD BODY, TO WHICH THE SON OF SIRACH REFERS, WAS BY SPRINKLING, AND YET HE CALLS IT BAPTISM.

Is it asked, how it comes that this argument has not long ago settled the question in every candid mind? I answer that it is because, somehow or other, writers on both sides have generally stumbled upon

the grammar of the 19th verse of this chapter. So true is it that philology and theology are own brothers. By some strange oversight the fact that the subject of both parts of the verse are one and the same has not been noticed.

This 19th verse reads thus: — "And the clean person shall sprinkle upon the unclean on the third day, and on the seventh day; and on the seventh day he (that is, the clean person who has now become somewhat unclean from contact with the unclean) shall purify HIMSELF, and wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water, and shall be clean at evening." The pronoun "he" has been improperly referred to the unclean who had touched the dead body, whereas it refers to the person originally clean who had used the hyssop and the water of separation.

Notice particularly the law upon the whole subject. That law required that a

clean person should take hyssop and dip it in the water and sprinkle it upon him that had touched a dead person. And then it also required that after thus sprinkling it upon the seventh day (which was for the last time) he should purify himself by washing his clothes and bathing. And by a wrong grammatical construction this washing and bathing have been referred to him who had touched the dead body. *They were not at all a part of his cleansing.* Nor was the sprinkling required of him who had used the hyssop. It is only necessary to read the verse naturally, without assuming any change of subject in passing from the first to the second clause, and everything is plain. The originally clean person, who had used the hyssop upon the unclean, was regarded as so far infected that he was required to become disinfected by washing his clothes and bathing himself in

water; and then he should be clean at evening.

There is nothing whatever to indicate that the *object* of the first part of the sentence becomes the *subject* of the second part. NOTHING WHATEVER. On the contrary the natural construction of the Hebrew, and equally so of the Greek in the Septuagint, as well as the English of our own versions,— both old and new,— all are in favor of the interpretation which I have given.

Besides, the whole context is confirmatory of it. Please to open to the passage and see how entirely plain it is. The 19th verse reads thus: —

"And the clean person shall sprinkle upon the unclean on the third day, and on the seventh day: and on the seventh day he shall purify himself, and wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water, and shall be clean at evening." Thus reads

the 19th verse. All this is required of THE CLEAN PERSON: — no intimation of any change of subject. But now notice how the next verse begins: —

"BUT THE MAN THAT SHALL BE UNCLEAN, and shall not purify himself, that soul shall be cut off from among the congregation," etc.

To suppose that the second clause of the 19th verse refers to the unclean person is wellnigh absurd, when it is so evident that there is no reference to him until the beginning of the next verse, where he is so formally introduced.

Notice, again, that in this same chapter there are several other enactments bearing upon precisely the same class of cases. For example, the priest who had officiated in connection with the slaying of the red heifer, and who had thus become infected, must pass through a similar process of disinfection. For this it is thus provided:

"Then the priest shall wash his clothes, and he shall bathe his flesh in water, and afterward he shall come into the camp, and the priest shall be unclean until the evening." (verse 7.)

Two other similar enactments follow: —

"And he that burneth her shall wash his clothes in water, and bathe his flesh in water, and shall be unclean until evening." (verse 8.)

"And he that gathereth the ashes of the heifer shall wash his clothes, and be unclean until evening." (verse 10.)

Notice, again, that after enacting in the 19th verse that the clean person who has become somewhat contaminated by sprinkling the water of separation shall go through with the process of washing his clothes and bathing, it follows in the 21st verse: "And it shall be *a perpetual statute* unto them, that he that sprinkleth the water of separation shall wash his

clothes." This form of making a statute perpetual seems never to be used *except when the statute has been previously announced.*[1] But unless we understand it to be announced in the latter half of the 19th verse, it is not found at all.

Every line of argument seems to compel the conclusion that I have given the only reasonable construction to the verse under consideration.

To none of all those mentioned in the 7th, 8th, and 9th verses was the water of separation applied. They who had anything to do with the purification of the unclean, even the one that gathered up the ashes, *must all of them be clean in the outset.* Their *infection* could be removed by bathing. But the unclean person must be cleansed BY THE SPRINKLING OF THAT WHICH SYMBOLIZED AND REPRESENTED THE

[1] See Ex. 12: 14, 17; 29: 9; 31: 16; Lev. 3: 17; 24: 3; Num. 18: 8, 19; 19: 10.

BLOOD OF CHRIST — AND BY THAT ALONE. The law recoiled from requiring more.

I do not see how the case could be made any stronger. Either the Son of Sirach was utterly ignorant of what constituted the cleansing from a dead body, to which he refers (and no one has ever suggested any question as to his competency), or he understood *baptizo* to be the right word to express a ceremonial cleansing which was performed SOLELY BY SPRINKLING.

That he was not ignorant we may certainly assume. And you can readily consult Josephus to discover that he understood the thing in the same way: that THE WHOLE CEREMONY OF CLEANSING FROM A DEAD BODY WAS BY SPRINKLING ALONE. And yet that ceremony is called *baptism* by the writer of this book of the Son of Sirach, which dates back at least two hundred years B.C.

Lest you may not have Josephus' works at hand, I will copy the sentence referred to. It is very significant, for it shows that this learned man, who certainly knew the Greek language as the Jews understood it, and knew Jewish customs, also called this sprinkling "baptism." He says: "*Baptizing* by this ashes put into spring water, they SPRINKLED on the third and seventh day."[1]

The Greek word which he uses is *baptizontes.*

Putting the words of the Son of Sirach by the side of those of Josephus, who wrote about two hundred and fifty years later, it will be seen that the word *baptizo* had for many generations been employed by the Jews who were familiar with the Greek to express this idea of ceremonial cleansing by water. It had been so used for at least two or three centuries before

[1] Jewish Antiquities, book iv: chapter 4.

Christ. If Christ had used it in any other sense, it would have been necessary for him to state that fact; they would not naturally have expected him to use the word in any other sense, nor would they have understood him if he had so used it.

And it is also seen that the word was so used *where the entire cleansing was* BY SPRINKLING.

LETTER VII.

IN your reply to my sixth letter you say: "If I remember correctly, a certain Baptist writer translates the passage to which you refer, in the writings of the Son of Sirach, somewhat like this: 'If he who has dipped or immersed himself on account of a dead body, shall again touch the corpse, what does his immersion avail?' I would like to hear what you have to say to that."

First of all I have to say that this translation is just like the "certain Baptist writer" to whom you refer. He begins with the ASSUMPTION that because *baptizo* in the classic Greek means immerse, therefore it means immerse everywhere and always, and he makes everything bend to this theory.

Were I to declare that *baptizo*, in Jewish writings, always means to sprinkle, I could prove it with less violence to the laws of language than the "certain Baptist writer" is perpetually committing in asserting dogmatically that it always means immerse.

To take, for example, the case of Naaman at the Jordan, I could say that it was certain that the Syrian general sprinkled himself, for there could be no question that the person alluded to in Ecclesiasticus cleansed himself by sprinkling. True the Hebrew states that Naaman dipped himself; but that is a mere figure of speech. He simply sprinkled himself; but he did it so copiously that he was just as wet as though he had dipped himself, and for that reason the Hebrew word *tawbal* is used; and I could justify myself by quoting Milton: "The dew dips me all o'er." Dew comes

down in mist, sprinkling one; but it may be so thorough a wetting as to be called a dipping. That sort of talk would be as reasonable as much of that "certain Baptist writer's"; that is, it would be very unreasonable.

But now, when I say that this word *baptizo*, meaning originally, in classic Greek, to immerse, came by a very common process, "illustrated in the history of a thousand words," to mean, in Jewish usage, to cleanse or purify, without reference to mode, I make a statement which does violence to no law of language. Here in the history of Naaman the Septuagint says that he baptized himself — that is, cleansed himself ceremonially — in the Jordan. The Hebrew says that he dipped himself. There is no contradiction; the Septuagint states the general fact of the cleansing; the Hebrew states the particular mode in which the cleansing was

done on that occasion. All is reasonable; no violence is done to any principle of interpretation whatever. It is not necessary to assume, as some do, that the Seventy intended to say the thing exactly as the Hebrew has said it; they often varied from the Hebrew in a similar way. Were two men who have traveled together from New York to Chicago to report their journey, the one might say: "We went by rail;" the other might say: "We went by a Pullman." The reader who should therefore insist that these two expressions were entirely synonymous, and that nobody could go by rail without taking a Pullman, would reason just as does the writer you quote on this subject.

There is such a thing as a fair treatment of language; there is such a thing as an unfair treatment of it. Dr. —— is sometimes very extravagant in his dogmatic statements; his exegesis is violent

and unreasonable and fails to carry conviction to those who stop to examine.

Let us look for a moment at his translation of the words of the Son of Sirach: "If one who has dipped or immersed himself on account of a dead body, shall afterwards touch again the dead body, what shall his dipping or immersion avail him?" Is this a fair translation? It can be shown, I think, that it is very unfair. It is a translation that he would never have thought of, but for that unwarranted ASSUMPTION of his as to the meaning of *baptizo*. He says: "This word means dip, or immerse; it always means dip, or immerse; it can't mean anything else; everything must yield to this."

Did not the Son of Sirach know the law of Moses to which he alludes in reference to ceremonial cleansing after one had touched a dead body? No one can question that. What was that law? I quoted

it in my last letter; but let me refer to it again. It is very well worth our while to have it distinctly before us. This passage is the great battleground of this controversy. Turn to Numbers 19:13, and you read: "Whosoever toucheth the dead body of any man, and purifieth not himself, . . . that soul shall be cut off from Israel; because the water of separation WAS NOT SPRINKLED UPON HIM, he shall be unclean." That is the whole of it. Not because he was not immersed — there was no immersion about it. The 17th and 18th verses describe the whole process: "They shall take of the ashes of the burnt heifer of purification of sin, and running water shall be put thereto in a vessel: and a clean person shall take hyssop, and dip it in the water, and SPRINKLE IT UPON HIM that touched the dead."

The 19th verse goes on to give directions that this should be done by a clean

person, and should be done twice — on the third day and on the seventh. The only "dipping" was of the hyssop into the water.

What right has Dr. —— to translate: "If any person has dipped or immersed himself on account of a dead body"? Did not the Son of Sirach know the law? He had seen it executed many a time, no doubt. And he says no such thing as the doctor has put into his mouth. What he says is: "If the man who has been *baptized* (that is, cleansed ceremonially) from a dead body — if he shall touch the dead body again, what does his cleansing avail him?" He said this, knowing that the whole process of *baptism* spoken of was in the sprinkling of the water which had been put upon the ashes of the burnt heifer. If the water of separation had not been sprinkled upon him, he was unclean; if it had, he was cleansed.

The doctor's translation is an unpardonable violence to the laws of human speech. When a man's theory compels him to such violence, he should conclude that his theory is wrong. After my study of this passage, I never could again assert that *baptizo* always meant immerse — NEVER — for here was a plain case, plain as day, where it was used in reference to a ceremonial cleansing that consisted WHOLLY IN SPRINKLING, and YET IT WAS CALLED BAPTISM.

AND THIS WAS IN A WRITING THAT WAS TWO HUNDRED YEARS OLD WHEN CHRIST WAS BORN.

But this to which I have referred is not the only violence to language which the doctor's translation of this passage involves. The preposition *apo* means "from," not "on account of." To speak of being "cleansed from a dead body" makes good sense; to speak of being

"immersed from a dead body" does not. So the doctor must translate *apo* "on account of." This is, to say the least, strained and far-fetched. In one instance in a thousand, perhaps, it might possibly bear such a translation. But it is doubtful. Certainly no such translation is given to it in the New Testament, although it is used about four hundred times.

Nor is this all. His translation of the last part of the sentence is not only without adequate foundation; it is absolutely against all the dictionaries and all the examples which I have been able to find. It is another illustration of the doctor's facility of assumption. "What avails his dipping, or immersion?" he renders it. The Greek word is *loutro. Louo,* the verb, is used six times in the Greek Testament and is always translated "wash." The noun is used twice and is in both cases translated "washing." The transla-

tion that I have given to it expresses the idea perfectly: "If he touch the dead body again, what avails his cleansing?"

The word often and more strictly means "a bath." And this suggests the very interesting and pertinent question as to what was the ancient method of bathing. For, as you know without any doubt, Baptist writers generally insist that "bathing" implies immersion. This is the doctor's assumption in his translation of this passage before us. It is a groundless assumption. I think whoever studies the subject thoroughly will find it true that in all Eastern bathing, in both ancient and modern times, it was regarded as a matter of chief importance that the water should be in motion. This was especially so among the Jews. The water applied to the ashes was to be "running water," as seen from the quotation above. (Num. 19:17.) In the Hebrew it is literally

"living" water. (See marginal rendering in Num. 19:17; Lev. 14:50, 51, 52.)

This was the idea with the Greeks and Romans as illustrated by their baths, as described by Dr. William Smith in his dictionary of Greek and Roman Antiquities. "It would appear," he says, "from the description of the bath administered to Ulysses in the palace of Circe, that the vessel did not contain water itself, but was only used for the bather to sit in while the water was poured over him. The water was heated in a large caldron, under which the fire was placed, and when sufficiently warmed was taken out in other vessels and poured over the head and shoulders of the person who sat in the bathtub."

Dr. Smith further says: "On ancient vases, on which persons are represented bathing, we never find anything corresponding to a modern bath in which persons can stand or sit; but there is always

a round or oval basin resting on a stand, by the side of which those who are bathing are represented standing undressed and washing themselves." [1]

Confirmatory of this is a description given by Plutarch of bathing among the Greeks, in which he says: "Some give orders to throw the water on cold; others warm." [2]

Wilkinson, on the manners and customs of the ancient Egyptians, speaks of a painting in an old tomb at Thebes, which represents a lady at the bath, in which one of her attendants is pouring water from a vase over her head.[3]

Travelers in the East find the same custom, even when persons resort to a river for bathing. It is not for immersion, but for running water, which is thrown, poured, or sprinkled upon the bather. WATER IN

[1] See Dr. Smith's Dictionary: Article, "Baths."
[2] See Wilson on Baptism, p. 167.
[3] vol. iii, p. 328.

MOTION seems everywhere to be sought for.

There is still another criticism upon the doctor's translation of the passage from the Son of Sirach. He translates: "If he who has dipped or immersed *himself*," etc. The doctor could not have failed to know, had he thought but a moment, that the person who had touched a dead body could not cleanse *himself* by any process whatever. The cleansing must be wrought by means of the sprinkling of the water of cleansing by another, that other being free from any taint of uncleanness.[1]

The doctor's translation is every way awry: the only fair translation is the one which I have quoted substantially from the common edition of the Apocrypha, sometimes bound up with our old version.

1 A clean person shall take hyssop, and dip it in the water, and sprinkle it upon him that touched a bone, or one slain, or one dead: and the clean person shall sprinkle upon the unclean on the third day, and on the seventh day. Num. 19: 18, 19.

LETTER VIII.

AS in your response to my last letter you express yourself entirely satisfied with the force of the argument based upon the usage of *baptizo* in the Septuagint, we are prepared to go forward.

The importance of this showing as to the accepted usage of the word at the time the New Testament was written cannot be overestimated; for thus it appears that this word was well understood among the Jews to mean just what I have claimed. It conveyed to those who heard Christ's teaching no other idea than that of ceremonial cleansing by water without regard to the mode of its application. This Greek translation of the sacred writings was the one with

which they were more familiar than they were even with the Hebrew Bible. It is from the Septuagint that Christ and the apostles generally quote.

True the word is found only three times in the Septuagint, but that is enough to illustrate the usage; and it is interesting to notice that in one of these three the baptism was by sprinkling, in one by immersion, in the other certainly, or almost certainly, not by immersion and probably by pouring. But whatever the mode of applying the water the word *baptizo* is used only in the general sense of ceremonial cleansing. Naaman baptized himself by immersion in the running Jordan. The man who had touched a dead body was baptized by sprinkling. Judith baptized herself at the fountain by sprinkling or pouring.

THE JEWS WERE THUS ALREADY ACCUSTOMED, AND HAD BEEN ACCUSTOMED FOR

TWO HUNDRED YEARS OR MORE, to using this word in this sense.

Does the meaning in the New Testament correspond with this usage?

To this it might be answered: "Of course it *must* have corresponded to this, for the Septuagint constituted the basis of their language." But I do not propose to assume so much as this. On the contrary, if you will have the patience to follow me, I will refer to every passage in which the word occurs. It is most fitting to begin with that found in Hebrews 9:10. You will see why. It is because the writer is referring to Jewish ordinances and customs; and these, of course, antedate those which are properly Christian.

The writer to the Hebrews is discoursing of the ceremonial dispensation "which stood only in meats and drinks and 'divers *baptisms*.'" (Greek, *baptismois*.)

In my review of the position which I

had so long and so honestly occupied (as I have spoken of it in my first letter) I said to myself when I came to this verse: "Here I shall find my Baptist views well sustained; there are plenty of immersions laid down in the ceremonial law to justify the writer of this epistle in speaking of them as 'divers baptisms.'" Accordingly I set myself to making an array of them. If you have not gone through with this or some similar experiment, you will scarcely be prepared to appreciate my astonishment at not being able to find one. *Purifyings* there were — "divers" of them; but immersions — not one! Of course my method was to take my Hebrew concordance and trace all the passages in which *tawbal* was used in the Old Testament in setting forth the things required of the worshiper. As I have previously stated, I found that the word was used only sixteen times in all, and the only

instance that approached a ceremonial usage, such as this verse speaks of, was Naaman's dipping or immersing himself in the Jordan; and in that case I found that he was not commanded to dip or immerse himself, but to *cleanse* himself. He chose to do it by immersion, and as the method of cleansing was not specified, it was proper for him to choose his own. I have not succeeded thus far in finding one instance in which anybody was required to dip or immerse himself, or to be dipped or immersed by another, from the beginning of Genesis to the end of Malachi. And yet the Epistle to the Hebrews speaks of this Old Testament Dispensation as embracing "divers *baptisms*."

You can readily believe that my previous notion that baptism always meant immersion received at this point another staggering blow. "*Divers baptisms*" — NOT ONE IMMERSION, is the way the case

stands. The Hebrews, to whom this epistle was written, understood the matter. Long before this the word baptism had come to mean ceremonial water cleansing, and not immersion, in all the sacred writings. Shall we find that it never means anything else, except in a figurative sense? We shall see.

For the present we confine our thoughts to this passage and must agree, I think, that upon the assumption that baptism meant ceremonial water cleansing, everything is clear; but assume for a moment that it meant immersion, and everything is dark. More than that — what the writer to the Hebrew says *is impossible to be understood at all upon that assumption.*

To this may be added the evidence from the context, which plainly indicates that the reference is to the "purifyings" under the law, and not to immersions, even had there been any; for the writer goes on to

say: "If the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of a heifer, *sprinkling the unclean*, sanctifieth to the *purifying* of the flesh; how much more shall the blood of Christ, who, through the Eternal Spirit, offered himself without spot to God, *cleanse* your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" (Heb. 9:13, 14.)

The ceremonial purifyings of the Old Testament Dispensation contrasted with the spiritual cleansing wrought through the blood of Christ is the obvious scope of the entire passage. Our translation uses the word 'washings" where it is *baptismois* in the Greek; but the word "purifyings" or "cleansings" would be preferable; for it appears from the passage itself that the writer has in mind the purifyings that were by *sprinkling* — that word being introduced no less than three times within nine verses. Read at your leisure the

whole chapter, and you will see that I am not mistaken in my interpretation of it. I think that I do not speak too strongly when I say that "divers immersions" is an utterly impossible version of the words which are so rendered by the Baptist Union.

MARK 7 : 2–4.

An allusion to Jewish customs that comes next in order is that found in the first part of the seventh chapter of Mark. I quote the verses : —

"There are gathered together unto him the Pharisees and certain of the scribes who had come from Jerusalem, and had seen that some of the disciples ate their bread with defiled, that is, with unwashen hands : For the Pharisees and all the Jews, except they wash their hands with the fist, eat not, holding the tradition of the elders ; and when they come from the market, except they baptize themselves,

they eat not; and many other things there be which they have received to hold, as the baptizings of cups and pots, and brazen vessels, and tables."

This is a very interesting passage. I have given it my own translation, which I will proceed to explain and defend. The word *pugmē* I have translated literally — "with the fist." In the old version it is translated "oft"; in the new version "diligently." I think that there is more light upon this point than has generally been seen hitherto, and after thorough study of the matter I have been entirely clear that the rendering which I have given it, suggested by M. C. Hazard in *The Congregationalist*, is the true one. But to that I will come again presently.

The first thing I wish to call your attention to is the practice to which allusion is here made of baptizing themselves whenever they returned from the market. That

this was immersion is incredible. Everybody in the East goes often to the market-place. It is a large open square and is the great public resort. It would require, with many, several immersions a day. Even "bathing," as we have seen, was not performed by immersion, and this "baptizing," of which Mark speaks, was obviously for ceremonial cleansing. The people had always known that even after having touched a dead body the "baptizing" was by sprinkling. The ceremonial cleansing from the leprosy was by sprinkling. "The priest shall sprinkle upon him that is to be cleansed from the leprosy seven times" (Lev. 14:7). At the public market one might have unknowingly touched some leper, or some unclean beast, or some one who was unclean from having touched a dead body; and it was not an unnatural thing that he should conclude that it was a proper precaution

to cleanse himself upon his return home; and the first thing he would think of was to do it by sprinkling. HE WOULD NEVER THINK OF DOING IT BY IMMERSION, there not being a single requirement for immersion in the whole Mosaic code. Moreover it must be by WATER IN MOTION. "Running water" — "living water" was always prescribed (see Lev. 14:5, 6, 51, 52; 15:13; Num. 19:17). This is a most important point to be noticed; and I beg of you to read the passages which I have indicated, so as to fix that point in mind thoroughly. As we have already seen, NO BATHING TUB FOR IMMERSION WAS EVER USED. When such a tub was used in connection with the bathing of the whole person, the bather used it simply for a receptacle of the water after it had been sprinkled or poured upon the body. The water was then defiled and unfit for further use.

The method of washing the hands at the present day as I found it in Syria and in Turkey is very suggestive of what there is every reason to believe was the custom in all Bible lands and Bible times. If you enter a house, the servant appears with a washbowl and pitcher. But you are never expected to pour water into the bowl and wash, as our habit is. The empty bowl is put in a place convenient for you to hold your hands over it. The attendant then pours the water on your hands, and you wash them with soap or without, and the dirty water falls into the bowl. It would shock every Oriental idea were you to dip your hands into the bowl unless you were without any possible means of doing otherwise. The water poured from the pitcher becomes "running water," and your hands are cleansed in that way.

And now we are prepared to under-

stand that clause about washing "with the fist." Many times there is no servant in attendance to pour the water or to sprinkle it upon the Oriental traveler or upon this man who comes home after contact with something or with somebody unclean. He must himself, therefore, perform the whole ceremony. How does he do it? He lays hold upon the pitcher himself with one hand and pours the water upon the other; and in turn takes the pitcher in the other hand and pours the water upon the first. So they are both cleansed in the "running water." I quote here the words of Mr. Hazard, to which I referred a little while ago: —

"It was a feeling that the real explanation of this passage had not yet been reached that led me several years ago to take the passage to a noted Jewish rabbi for interpretation. He read it in the Greek, and then contemptuously said: 'It is evi-

dent that Mark did not know what he was talking about.' Catching my breath at such an easy disposing of the matter and of the author of the second Gospel, I approached the subject from a new direction. I asked the rabbi whether it is true that now the Pharisees do not eat, except as they first baptize their hands. He replied in the affirmative, and, on my request for more information, said: 'But we do not baptize them as you do in a quiet pool, but in running water, either in a natural stream or in the water flowing from a hydrant, or in water poured from some vessel by main strength from one hand upon the other.' The expression 'by main strength' immediately caught my attention, and I said to him: 'Rabbi, I thought that you said that Mark did not know what he was writing about. When he says "from the fist," does n't he mean exactly what you have now said? Ordi-

narily it would have been impossible in Mark's day for any one to have baptized his hands at home in running water, except as he poured it out of some pitcher or basin "from the fist" upon the other hand.' The rabbi thought for a moment, and then, with a candor which much commended this modern Pharisee, said: 'I was wrong; that was what Mark did mean.'"

Mr. Hazard then goes on to say: "The rabbi had awakened my curiosity in saying that the Jews never baptize their hands except in running water, and I asked him for the reason of that. His reply was that 'still water represents death and corruption, and running water life and the quickening influences of God's Spirit.' 'In any of their ceremonial lavations,' I inquired, 'do the Jews lay any emphasis upon the amount of water in which they baptize?' 'None; the tiniest stream of

water would suffice for his most complete ceremonial lavation.'"

There is also another practice which the modern traveler has frequent occasion to observe, which may have prevailed in New Testament times, and to which reference may have been made in this passage. Sometimes there is no vessel which the man can lift even "by main strength," and in that case he takes up a "fist" full of water — say in his right hand — and pours it or sprinkles it upon the left. The left is thus cleansed. But, although the right hand has gone into the water, it is not yet cleansed; for it went only into the stagnant water. The left "fist" in like manner is used to cleanse the right hand by water set in motion; so thoroughly is the mind possessed of the idea that it must be water in motion in order to effect the cleansing. One who sees day after day this process constantly gone through with

can easily believe that it might have been this which was referred to by Mark.

This word *pugmē* has always been a troublesome one to the translator and to the commentator. It is found only once in the New Testament, and hence there is no opportunity for comparing different passages in which it is used. But it is thoroughly confirmatory of this interpretation to notice that this same word is used twice in the Septuagint, and in both cases it is unhesitatingly to be translated "with the fist," and nothing else.[1]

It is, therefore, almost certain to my mind that this is the only proper translation here; and it renders a very obscure passage entirely intelligible.

It may also be added that it would be difficult, if not impossible, to find any

[1] If men strive together, and one smite another with a stone, or with his fist, and he die not, but keepeth his bed, etc. Ex. 21: 18. Behold, ye fast for strife and debate, and to smite with the fist of wickedness. Is. 58: 4.

authority in classic Greek for the translation given, either in the old or the new version. I have never seen quoted, in any Greek lexicon, a single passage in which the word is supposed to mean either *oft* or *diligently*. Liddell and Scott refer only to the passage in Mark, as one in regard to which they do not commit themselves; but only say that "it is interpreted by some to mean diligently, and by others oft." Professor Thayer, in his lexicon of the New Testament, seems decidedly to accept the translation which is here advocated, although he makes a different comment upon it.[1]

[1] *Pugmē niptesthai tas cheiras*, to wash the hands with the fist, that is, so that one hand is rubbed with the clenched fist of the other. Translating "with the fist," each reader can decide for himself which of the two *explanations* is the more natural. With the Eastern custom in mind, as it is seen everywhere, it is easy for me to decide; for Professor Thayer's comment is just as consistent with our fashion of washing as with theirs, and does not imply that the water is in motion at all, which with them is the main thing. I have often seen the ceremonial cleansing of very dirty hands without the slightest attempt at any rubbing. In truth, the hands were just as dirty after the "cleansing" as before. But they had sprinkled the water very vigorously.

In this same passage is the reference to the baptism of "tables," and, according to some of the manuscripts, of "couches." I am aware that the most approved manuscripts do not contain either of these words. But the fact that these readings are among the oldest shows that they were accepted for centuries; and they never would have been introduced had there been any supposed impossibility in baptizing tables and couches. Their *immersion* was a manifest impossibility. Let any one visit the old city of Pompeii, buried up in A.D. 70, and see the uniform construction of their tables — occupying three sides of a hollow square, stationary, incapable of immersion — and all doubt on that subject will be at once removed. They were baptized, if at all, by sprinkling, beyond any reasonable question. *Baptizo* had long before that come to express the idea of ceremonial purification;

such ceremonial purification was never once required to be by immersion; it was, in many instances, commanded to be by sprinkling, and hence it is the most natural conclusion possible that they never dreamed of baptizing tables and couches by dipping them.

In Luke 11:38 is another passage showing the use of the word *baptizo* among the Jews. A Pharisee had invited Jesus to dine with him, and he went in and sat down to meat: "And when the Pharisee saw it, he marvelled that he had not first baptized himself before eating." It is very hard to believe that Christ was expected to immerse himself before eating.

This is evidently the same sort of thing that is spoken of in the passage which we have just been considering. Christ had been mingling with the multitude. It was the need of ceremonial cleansing in the

ordinary way which they had in mind. That was by sprinkling. There is no proof that their houses were constructed with accommodations for immersion of all their guests: the proof is on the other side.

In the account of the marriage at Cana of Galilee we have the thing so described as to make it visible. "There were set twelve firkins *after the manner of the Jews purifying.*" From this water the guests drew off and sprinkled themselves — or the servants poured it upon them. The water was so used that it was entirely fit for drinking purposes. Not even the hands of the guests were put into it; it was for something very different from immersion.

Next in chronological order comes the use of this word in describing John's baptism, and I begin by saying that even if it could be proved that immersion was

sometimes practiced in New Testament times — nay, if it could be proved that it was always practiced — that would not settle the question that immersion was *required.* That is to be determined only by the meaning of the word.

"What does the law of Christ require?" is the only question that vitally concerns us. Christ and his apostles sat while they preached. We are commanded to preach, but we are not commanded to sit while we preach. Christ and his apostles always traveled either on foot or on horseback or in boats, when they went on their preaching tours. We are commanded to go into all the world with the gospel, but we are not commanded to go in the same way they went. Christ and his apostles celebrated the Lord's supper *reclining* at table. (This is the only meaning of the word used in the Greek, although our translators have rendered it by our word "sit.")

We are commanded to eat and drink, but we are not commanded to do it reclining. They went about doing good, wearing sandals and loose flowing togas. We are required to go about doing good, but we are not confined to their manner of doing it.

As to the meaning of the words "baptize" and "baptism," we have found that they were sometimes (to say the least) used of ceremonial cleansing which was performed without immersion; that the writer to the Hebrews refers to the Old Dispensation as requiring of the worshiper "divers baptisms," while in the Old Testament IMMERSION IS NEVER ONCE REQUIRED.

This settles the question — that the law of baptism does not require immersion; and the particular manner, therefore, in which John and the apostles baptized is as immaterial to us as their manner of dressing, their methods of missionary

travel, or their position at the Lord's table.

I say thus much because we ought always to make this discrimination between what the apostles did and what we are required to do. They had all things common, and it has sometimes been argued that their example is a law to us. This is a mistake. Their example is not at all binding upon us any farther than it can be shown that it was in accordance with the commands of the Master.

I do not speak of this because I think that, as a matter of fact, John the Baptist and the apostles baptized by immersion as a general thing. I do not think that they did. In some cases it is certain to my mind that they did not: in none is it certain that they did. But even if they did, it imposes no obligation on us.

With this preliminary statement we can come to the study of the history with a

proper appreciation of the weight of the argument, whatever it may be. First in order comes the record of John's baptism.

It is argued that this was by immersion on two grounds: —

I. "The baptism is said to be in the river Jordan." This proves nothing, for (1) it was so distinctly impressed upon every Jew that ceremonial cleansing (which we have already shown was expressed by the word "baptism") must always be by running water (or, as it is in the Hebrew, "living water") that we can readily understand how much pains would be taken to reach it. (2) The preposition which is here translated "in" is very frequently rendered "at." You will hear it said that only *epi* means "at," and that *en* means "in." But this is so far from being an invariable rule that any one who will be at the trouble of looking the matter up will find that *epi* is found only forty-four

times in the Greek where we have in our version the rendering "at," over against one hundred and two times in which "at" is the translation of *en*. (3) The expression "in the river Jordan" applies to the whole river bed, which is often — I may more truly say almost always — much wider than the stream. Travelers speak of pitching their tents "in the river Jordan," meaning within the outer banks of course, not in the water.

II. "The account states that Jesus, after his baptism, went up out of the water; this implies his immersion." I reply: (1) "out of the water" is admitted by all competent critics not to be an exact translation. No Baptist scholar would be willing to risk his reputation upon such a rendering of the preposition *apo*. In the Revised Version it is translated "from" and never should have been translated otherwise. (2) Assuming that

John used a bunch of hyssop and performed the baptism according to the old law — dipping it into the running water and sprinkling those who came to his baptism — everything told us of John's baptism at the Jordan would apply. There is not one circumstance, nor one detail, that would need to be changed.

LETTER IX.

IN response to my last you say: "How do you get along with the version of the Baptist Union, in which they translate Matt. 3 : 11 — 'I indeed immerse you IN water'? Is not the preposition *en* used here, and are they not justified in saying 'in water'? I would prefer to retain the word 'baptize': but why not translate, 'I, indeed, baptize you IN water'?"

You put the matter very well; and I will endeavor to make my answer plain to one who has not studied the Greek as well as to one who has. Let me say, then, three things :—

1. The preposition *en* often means "with." It is so translated in our Common Version more than a hundred times.

Take one verse as a sample to illustrate its use in expressing, as the grammars say, "the manner, means, or instrument." It is found in 1 Cor. 5 : 8 : "Let us keep the feast not *with* old leaven, neither *with* the leaven of malice and wickedness, but *with* the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth." Three times in this verse *en* is translated "with." No English scholar, I think, would translate it in any other way.

2. That this is the proper translation whenever it is used in referring to water baptism is made clear from the fact that in three out of eight cases in which water baptizing is spoken of THERE IS NO PREPOSITION AT ALL. For example, in Matt. 3 : 11, John is represented as saying, "*ego baptizo humas en hudati*," while in Luke 3 : 16 the same statement of John is in these words : "*ego baptizo humas hudati.*" In this last form *hudati* can be nothing

else but the "dative of means, or instrument." "I baptize you *with* water" is the obvious and only translation. Hence the parallel passage in Matthew must naturally be translated in the same way. In other words the case stands thus: Luke's version of what John says can only mean "WITH water"; Matthew's version, taken by itself, could be translated either "WITH water" or "IN water." The former makes the two accounts to harmonize completely, and is therefore to be preferred.

3. You will see also that it is too plain for contradiction; that, as no one would ever think of saying, "I immerse you *with* water," "immerse" is not the proper translation of "baptize" in Luke 3 : 16. And if not in this verse, then it is not in the parallel verse in Matt. 3 : 11.

But we wish to study this passage which speaks of John's baptism a little

more thoroughly, to see whether the definition of "baptize" as expressing the idea of ceremonial cleansing does not entirely fit the whole connection far better than the theory that it means immerse.

Here is the passage in full: "I, indeed, baptize you with water, but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear. He shall baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire."

Understanding the word baptize to express purification or cleansing, everything is plain. John's cleansing was by water; Christ's should be by the Spirit and by fire. An evident advance in thought, which is entirely natural, purification running through the whole. And as if to make it still plainer the very next clause reads: "whose fan is in his hand; and he will thoroughly PURGE his floor, and gather his wheat into his garner, but he

will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire."

"John the Baptist" was not "John the Immerser," but "John the Purifier." He was recognized, I take it, as a sort of stern, rigid, uncompromising Puritan. The people came to his baptism, confessing their sins. He preaches plain truths; tells them of One yet to be revealed, who will purify them more thoroughly by far.

They would naturally think of the prophecy four hundred years before — "Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me; and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the Covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, He shall come, saith the Lord of Hosts. But who may abide the day of his coming? And who shall stand when he appeareth? For he is like a refiner's

fire, and like fullers' soap, and he shall sit AS A REFINER AND PURIFIER OF SILVER; and he shall PURIFY the Sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness."

These prophecies — referring to the coming of Christ and particularly to his forerunner — might naturally lead them to expect some one who should come as a PURIFIER; and they would recognize John as fulfilling the prophecy. Hence that question of the priests and Levites who were sent to John to find out who he was. He was not Elias, nor the Christ, nor a prophet. "Why baptizest thou, then, if thou be not the Christ, nor Elias, neither that prophet?" I know of no prophecy foretelling that either Christ or his messenger should *immerse* anybody; but various prophecies spoke of them as PURIFIERS. For example: "Then will I

sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean"; "So shall he sprinkle many nations." I understand these prophecies to foretell, in figurative language, that Christ should come to purify. For ceremonial purification was so often by sprinkling, so generally by sprinkling, that the figure would be readily understood. And so the writer to the Hebrews speaks of having "our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience."

If it be asked just here, why "sprinkle" was not used in the Commission instead of "baptize," if ceremonial cleansing was to be expressed, it may be answered that sprinkling was sometimes of blood, sometimes of ashes, not always of water. Christ wished to employ water henceforward as the only emblem of purification; and so he chose another word, ALREADY IN WELL-ESTABLISHED USAGE — a word that had been for centuries used to express

the idea of ceremonial cleansing by water, and whose original signification would suggest the thoroughness and completeness of the cleansing that was to be wrought.

Understanding "baptism" to express this general idea, all is plain. Understanding it to mean "dip, plunge, or immerse," everything is awkward and obscure.

Take another passage: "After these things came Jesus and his disciples into the land of Judæa; and there he tarried with them, and baptized. And John also was baptizing in Ænon, near to Salim, because there was much water there and they came and were baptized. . . . Then there arose a question between some of John's disciples and the Jews about *purifying*. And they came unto John, and said unto him, Rabbi, he that was with thee beyond Jordan, to whom thou bearest witness,

behold, the same baptizeth, and all men come to him." This whole narrative indicates the close relationship between the two words "baptize" and "purify." Two views may be taken of it: either that the two terms are used interchangeably, as substantially synonymous; or that, without being synonymous, the baptizing which was understood to symbolize purity led to a discussion about purifying in general.

Either view is inconsistent with the theory that regards baptism as a symbol of death and resurrection. For in that case, while the ordinance might have led to a general discussion of that topic, it is not easy to see how purifying could have become the subject of dispute at all.

But I think that more than this is demanded by the exegesis of this passage. Two parties baptizing: a controversy as to whether they both had an equal right to

do so; the settlement of that controversy by John's telling them that Christ had as good a right to baptize as he, and even a better right — that I can understand. Such a paraphrase makes the whole case clear. But this supposes baptizing and purifying to be employed as substantially synonymous terms; and this, I cannot help thinking, is the true interpretation.

"But could not a general discussion on purification grow out of baptism," it is asked, "without supposing the two things to be the same?" Most certainly; but what has their statement of the case, when they come to John, to do with a general discussion of that sort? Nothing. The nature of the dispute is not specifically stated, and can be only inferred from what precedes and from what follows. The antecedent fact stated is that both Jesus and John were baptizing near together. The natural inference is that

the dispute was as to the apparently conflicting claims of the two; and this inference becomes irresistible when we discover that this was the only question which they brought to John and the only one to which he makes the slightest allusion in his reply. If they did have a discussion of the general subject of purification, their statement of the case to John is quite unaccountable, and his whole reply still more so.

Read over the whole narrative as it is recorded in John 3 : 22–36, and you will see plainly that the facts are : —

(1) Both Jesus and John were baptizing in Ænon.

(2) There arose a question about PURIFYING.

(3) Some persons went to John to tell him that Jesus was BAPTIZING; and they evidently had a feeling that he ought not to be doing it.

(4) John assures them of Christ's supremacy in all things.

That is the whole story; and I am constrained to believe that there was but one subject suggested by these verses, — which in one place is called baptizing, in another purifying, — the two words being used interchangeably as though substantially synonymous.

What do the Baptist critics say to this?

Dr. Carson replies in substance: — "It is none of our business to explain the connection! The historian states that they were immersing; and purification and immersion we know are not the same: purify is a general term: baptize is not." If this style of argument is not what logicians call "a begging of the question," we confess that we do not know what would be.

"But does not the historian say that John was baptizing at Ænon, because there was 'much water' there? And

does not that indicate immersion as the method of his baptism?"

I answer: —

1. Every scholar knows that the word "Ænon" means "fountains" or "springs." The springs are still there, as they were two thousand years ago.

2. Any one who knows even a very little Greek can discover that the words translated "much water" are in the plural, and literally translated would read "many waters."

3. Even a Baptist minister would need neither a great body of water, nor many springs, even for purposes of immersion. Hence an allusion to either "much water" or "many waters" is not at all necessary to explain the simple fact of baptism, whatever the method of it may have been.

4. For some other reason, therefore, than baptism did John choose this loca-

tion: and it is not difficult to find a reason far more satisfactory. Immense throngs of people waited on the ministry of this mighty preacher. Many of them came from afar. It was, so to speak, a great "camp-meeting" that was held at Ænon. The "many springs" would be in requisition for accommodating both man and beast.

5. John never baptized, except where there was running water. He would have revolted from the thought of a baptistery. It must be "living" water. Hence the Jordan. But one of the living springs at Ænon might have answered his purpose, no matter what his manner of baptizing. For myself, I am of the opinion that all his Jewish education would lead him to dip a bunch of hyssop into the running water, and sprinkle it upon the people in token of their turning away from their sins unto the living God. The words

of the Psalmist were familiar to him: "Purge me *with hyssop*, and I shall be clean." It was so often by sprinkling of the hyssop that cleansing came under the law. He had read the prophecy, "I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean." He had often heard that other prophecy, "So shall he sprinkle many nations"; and although he knew full well, as his preaching shows, that he did not understand any outward ceremony as having in itself saving or cleansing power, yet when an outward ceremony symbolizing inward cleansing was to be used he would most naturally employ the ceremony which from time immemorial had been used to express it.

LETTER X.

IN your reply to my last, you say: "Your discussion of the baptism at Ænon is quite satisfactory to me on the whole; but there is one point upon which I would like to have a little more light. It is this: some of the Baptist writers tell me that *polla hudata* means more properly 'much water' in a body than many fountains, and they quote some examples to illustrate that use of it. What answer would you make to that?"

To this I reply:—

1. There is not at the present time any "body" of water at Ænon, nor any indication that there has ever been, in historic times, such a body: but there are plenty of springs.

2. Admitting that *polla hudata* may be used in speaking of a body of water and be rendered, in a general way, "much water," it is altogether likely that the conception of the writer would be quite as well expressed by rendering the words "many waters," as they are in Rev. 1:15 and 19:6.

3. That the expression may be used in speaking of a number of fountains is entirely clear from a passage in 2 Chron. 32:3, 4. The passage reads thus: "He [Hezekiah] took counsel with his princes and his mighty men to stop the waters of the *fountains* which were without the city: and they did help him. So there was gathered much people together, who stopped all the fountains, and the brook that ran through the midst of the land, saying, Why should the kings of Assyria come, and find *much water?*" In the Greek Septuagint the words are *polla*

hudata, which seems evidently to refer to these fountains and the brook — no body of water being spoken of.

I come now to speak of the baptism of the three thousand on the day of Pentecost. This is easily understood upon the theory that the word *baptizo* was understood to mean what I have proved it to mean at the time of Christ's coming and before. It is an account not easy to be understood upon the Baptist assumption that the word "baptize means always immerse." This was a large number to be immersed, as all admit. Many of them were strangers who had come to the feast — "Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites," and all the rest whose nationality is mentioned in the Acts. It is not at all likely that they would be prepared with convenient changes of raiment for immersion and still less likely that they were immersed in a state of nudity. Such indel-

icacy and superstition had not developed themselves at that day.

And then consider the circumstances: They were at Jerusalem. There is no natural body of water there or near there. The "brook Kedron" is ordinarily an almost dry watercourse. Unless the seasons were entirely different then from what they are now — of which there is no proof and no probability — there would have been only a little rill of water at the time of Pentecost. There were therefore no facilities about Jerusalem for immersion, except in the reservoirs of water used for drinking and cooking. To conceive of the apostles baptizing in these is preposterous. Forbidden by common decency, it would have been especially forbidden by the violent and unyielding superstition of the Jews, even had they been favorably inclined towards the apostles and their religion. But it

would have been especially forbidden by the deadly hostility to the new faith which then prevailed. They would not have allowed their best friends to be immersed in these pools; and the disciples of that Christ whom they had just crucified would by all means have been prevented from propagating their religion in the use of any body of water under their control.

I have studied this subject in Jerusalem, and I cannot see how any one familiar with the topography of the city, and considering the times of violent persecution which erelong scattered the Church to the ends of the earth, can for a moment accept with any assurance the belief that the three thousand were immersed on the day of Pentecost; there being no natural body of water to furnish facilities and no artificial reservoirs to which access would not have been utterly impossible.

And then the baptism of the jailer. It has always been difficult for the Baptist theory to provide for that baptism. Their sole dependence is upon the word *baptizo*. "That means nothing but immerse: and the historian says that the jailer was immersed. Deny it, if you dare! It is none of our business to find a baptistery!" This is our Baptist scholar's method of disposing of the matter!

But we have already proved beyond all successful contradiction that in the Septuagint and in the New Testament usage the word *baptizo* is used to express ceremonial purification by water without reference to mode and in cases where immersion is entirely out of the question; so that the whole foundation of such an assumption is entirely gone.

We understand baptism, then, to be *a ceremony of cleansing and consecration to a holy service.* This makes the formula of

baptism plain: — "I baptize thee in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit," better translated, "*to* the name," etc. (The proposition is *eis*, which is translated "to" about five hundred times in the New Testament.) We are thus set apart to the service of God and thus we consecrate our children.

The passage in 1 Cor. 10:2 becomes easy of interpretation: — "They were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea." Baptist writers are zealous to find immersion here; and so they suppose that the sea being on their two sides, the cloud must have been above them; thus they were enveloped. This is mere theory; and the unfortunate thing about it is that the history states that the cloud was *behind* them and not *above* them. Certainly it was not also *before* them. On the other hand I have heard a zealous pædobaptist suggest that the spray

of the sea probably sprinkled them, and thus they were baptized! It is more sensible to find here no reference whatever to the *act* of baptism, but to the understood significance of it as an act of consecration expressive of our faith in Him to whom we thus are consecrated. As in our baptism we are set apart to the service of God, promising obedience and fidelity, so were the children of Israel set apart to follow Moses as their divinely appointed leader. In the cloud which protected them and in the sea which opened to allow their passage was the evidence of his divine appointment: and in these manifestations they saw that it was safe to follow him. So were they baptized unto him.

Before closing this letter I wish to call your attention to another point, which seems to me to fall in most happily with the idea of cleansing as conveyed by the

word baptize. It is this, that this view of the matter accords with the true conception of the substantial unity of the two dispensations. It is not necessary that we should go into the matter very largely to argue the substantial oneness of the Church from the beginning. There has been but one plan of salvation, but one way of pardon, but one system of truth, but one Church from Abraham down.

Christ said: — "I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill." Old Testament and New Testament make together one Bible.

The coming of Christ is the common center of both. Abraham was saved by Christ as really as those to whom Peter preached at the Pentecost.

Under the Old Dispensation there were two ordinances, Circumcision and the Passover. Under the New Dispensation there are two, Baptism and the Lord's

Supper. The two great doctrines of both dispensations are the same, justification and sanctification — forgiveness and holiness — pardon and purity.

Standing at the middle point — the great center of all the centuries, THE CROSS OF CHRIST, we see it written — "Without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sins." The Passover was the feast commemorative of deliverance by the blood of sprinkling; the Lord's Supper shows forth the Lord's death till the end of time and commemorates *our* deliverance by the blood of sprinkling. Both speak of pardon.

Circumcision symbolized purity — the putting away of the filthiness of the flesh and spirit. Many passages so represent: — "Circumcise, therefore, the foreskin of your heart:" "He is not a Jew, who is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: but

he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter:" "We are the circumcision, who worship God in the Spirit."

Now, if baptism, under the New Testament Dispensation, is also ceremonial cleansing, the unity is complete; but if it is burial, and not purification, the unity is broken.

I present this argument — not as conclusive in itself, but as strongly presumptive in favor of the view which has been presented, and as confirmatory of the unequivocal proofs already submitted, showing that baptism means cleansing and not immersion. The unity is not broken.

If you will be kind enough to call my attention, in your next letter, to any points upon which you would wish to have more light, or to any difficulties which you

may find in accepting the general teaching of these letters, I will be better able to present just the things which are necessary to clear up all the difficulties in the case. Truth is always in harmony with itself; and whenever one comes to occupy the right standpoint this harmony appears.

LETTER XI.

IN reply to my tenth letter you say: "You have spoken somewhat of the use of the preposition *eis*, upon which the Baptist writers have a good deal to say; but I would be glad to have you discuss that matter of the prepositions which are translated 'into' and 'out of' more fully, so that if I accept your views upon the main question (as I think I shall be compelled to) I may be able to meet the arguments of my Baptist brethren on that part of the subject; for you know, as well as I do, how much stress they lay upon it." You say also: "Perhaps you are right in what you maintain — that the way in which the apostles baptized settles nothing as to the law of baptism, and does

not, therefore, form any absolute rule for our direction; but I am not sure as yet that I am prepared to follow you fully in that line of your discussion."

I am glad of your frankness; this is what above all else I appreciate — that you should criticise thoroughly every word I write; and that you should yield to no argument that you can find any fault with. As you said in one of your first letters to me, "Nothing will do us any good but the truth."

With your permission I will take up your last difficulty first. What I hold is this, that even if it could be shown that the apostles invariably immersed (which I by no means accept as a fact) still it would not result from that fact alone, that we are under any obligation to immerse. If the law of baptism requires immersion, then it is our duty to practice immersion whether the apostles did or not; if the

law does not so require, we are bound only by what it does require. The law of God is perfect and covers the whole ground. There is no such thing as a work of supererogation. There is no virtue in "will-worship."

In a former letter I gave various instances in which the manner of doing things is entirely different from what it was in those days; showing that we had just as good a right to do them in our way as they had to do them in their way. We recognize and acknowledge this in respect to our modes of preaching, of dress, of eating and drinking, and many other like things. So far as there is anything said on the subject, it seems probable that they celebrated the Lord's Supper every Lord's day; as it is entirely certain that they always partook of it *reclining*, but we do not hold ourselves under obligation to have communion

every week. Nor do Christian people at the present day make their own practice in such matters a law for others. Some sit around a table to receive the communion; some receive it sitting in their seats at church; some receive it kneeling; some have communion every Sabbath; some every month; some once in two or three months; some once a year. Some churches almost invariably practice sprinkling; but they do not, by so doing, declare that the Baptists are wrong in practicing immersion.

If the example of the apostles settles just how baptism should be administered, then we might conclude that it was only done properly when it was at a river, or, to say the least, out-of-doors. There is no instance in the New Testament of baptism *in a baptistery:* and if what the apostles *did* makes law for us our Baptist brethren who use a baptistery have

certainly gone astray. I think, upon full consideration of the whole case, we must agree that the law of the ordinance itself and alone must settle the question. If it has been shown, beyond a reasonable question, that the word *baptizo* was well understood to express the general idea of ceremonial cleansing by water, then that is all that we need to know; beyond that it is a matter of interesting study and interpretation but of no vital consequence.

As, however, the point to which you call my attention — whether the prepositions used in connection with the ordinance of baptism, as set forth in the New Testament, prove immersion — is so often referred to by our good Baptist brethren, I am very willing to go into the investigation: and think you will find that the facts do not make their position so strong as they seem to suppose.

Take, first, the rendering of *eis* as meaning "into." I wish to make the discussion as brief as I can; so I will give you the bare facts with little comment. This preposition *eis* which is appealed to to prove that persons who were baptized by the apostles and by John the Baptist went into the water is, in our translation, rendered about five hundred times "into," and about the same number of times it is rendered "to." So that no argument based upon this preposition can have very much force to maintain the theory of immersion. If you were to look into "The Englishman's Greek Concordance," you would find that in many of these examples the rendering might be changed from one to the other without any violence. But in some it would be quite impossible to use "into"; such as: "His disciples were come *to* the other side"; "Go thou *to* the sea,

and cast a hook"; "Go home *to* thy friends"; etc.

There is one unequivocal method of saying that a man went into the water, or into his house, or into a city; and that is to use a verb compounded with the prepposition *eis* as a prefix, either alone or followed by the preposition. Thus in the twentieth chapter of John, beginning with the 3d verse, we have this passage:

"Peter, therefore, went forth, and that other disciple, and came TO (*ērchonto* EIS) the sepulchre. So they ran both together; and the other disciple did outrun Peter, and came first TO the sepulchre (came to=*ēlthe* EIS). And he, stooping down, saw the linen clothes lying: yet went he not in (went in=EIS-*ēlthen*). Then cometh Simon Peter following him, and went INTO the sepulchre (went into= EIS-*ēlthen* EIS). Then went in also that other disciple (went in=EIS-*ēlthe*) which

came first to the sepulchre ('which came to' is, literally, 'the one coming to'=*ho elthon* EIS)." I quote this paragraph in full, at the risk of marring my letter with more Greek than I like to introduce, so that you may see how the distinction is made between "going TO" and "going INTO" a place.

Now what I wish to add is this: that this ONLY UNEQUIVOCAL METHOD OF EXPRESSING THE IDEA OF GOING INTO IS NEVER USED IN SPEAKING OF GOING INTO THE WATER FOR BAPTISM.

You see plainly from the verses which I have quoted that *eis* by itself does not convey the meaning of "into." Three times in this short paragraph "coming *to*" the sepulchre is expressed, always by *eis* alone; and three times the idea of going "*into*" is also expressed, and always by a different method. And these examples illustrate the law of the Greek language.

If it be true that the eunuch was baptized by immersion, it is not because it is so recorded. For admitting that they both went into the water, that might easily have been without any reference to immersion. The style of dress, a loose flowing robe, was very favorable for stepping into the water; and the sandals that were worn were removed in the easiest possible way. And the baptism might easily have been by pouring or sprinkling. Some of the oldest pictures in the catacombs of Rome represent the baptism of those days as having been performed by pouring water upon the person standing in the water. Everything must be determined in the end by the meaning of the word itself. Assuming that they both went down into the water, that does not prove that it was for the purpose of immersion; after they were in the water, we are informed that Philip baptized him.

And as we have found that beyond all question the word "baptized" was broad enough to cover every method of ceremonial cleansing — from sprinkling to immersion — we cannot affirm that the eunuch was immersed. The running water was reached and it may have been sprinkled or poured upon him. Their being in the water proves nothing as to the mode of the baptism.

The prepositions which are translated "out of" in like manner determine nothing; as you will see from a study of their use in the New Testament as well as from the Greek language generally. The first of these prepositions is *apo*, which is used by Matthew and also by Mark in their account of the baptism of Christ.

This preposition properly means "from" and not "out of." Some dictionaries do not give "out of" as one of its meanings;

and it is very doubtful, to say the least, whether it should ever be translated so. It is used more than six hundred times in the New Testament and only some forty times translated "out of." I am not hazarding much in saying that "from" would be a better rendering in every one of these instances. In the Revised Version this is the rendering which is given in almost all if not every one of the cases. Take a few of the examples and it will be seen that the change is fully justified. "The lightning cometh *out of* the East"; "They intreated him to depart *out of* their coasts"; "Coming *out of* the country"; "Lot went *out of* Sodom"; "Letters *out of* Judea"; etc. "From" might quite as well be used as "out of."

The learned gentlemen who served the American Bible Union in making their version have generally shown much critical ability: and where their Baptist views

— shall I say prejudices? — do not warp their judgment it is very much to be respected. Their treatment of *apo* is an illustration of both their critical ability in general and their denominational prejudices in particular. For finding *apo* translated forty times in our common version by "out of," they correct it by substituting "from" in nearly every other instance, except these two which refer to baptism! The remaining four passages in which they leave it are such as "vanished out of their sight," where they might as well have said "vanished from their sight," and three others of equal insignificance! It would not do to correct every other one of the whole forty and leave these two Baptist turrets solitary and alone lest the reason of it should be too obvious! As it is, they have scarcely saved themselves from the charge of making a sectarian translation.

The preposition *ek* is the other preposition which is rendered "out of," and this rendering is more plausible. All I wish to say is that this is so often rendered "from" that no strong argument can be drawn from it to prove that the baptized had been into the water and come "out of" it. You would find, if you cared to look it up, that even *ek* is rendered "from" about one hundred and seventy times in our Common Version against about one hundred and forty times where it is rendered "out of."

The *certain* way of stating that one went out of a place may be seen from the following examples:—

Mark 5:8. "Come out of the man" (*ex-elthe ek tou anthropou*).

Mark 7:31. "Going out from the coasts of Tyre" (*ex-elthon ek ton horion Turou*).

Luke 4:22. "Going out of his mouth" (*ek-poreuomenois ek ton stomatos autou*).

You observe that in these cases the preposition *ek* (or *ex* before a vowel) precedes the verb as a part of it and also precedes the noun: a construction similar to that which we found in the case of the preposition *eis* where the idea of entering into was expressed. There is no case where this unequivocal manner of saying that one goes "out of" a place is found in connection with baptism. We are compelled, therefore, to the conclusion that there is no certain evidence in the New Testament that any one either went into the water or came out of it in connection with baptism.

But I repeat it, if there were, it still remains unproved that the baptism was by immersion; and if it were, it still does not, by any means, show that in the judgment of the apostles it could not have been performed in some other way. The fact that my neighbor, Dr. G., has not in

ten years baptized any person except by sprinkling does not show that he considers no other method to be valid baptism.

The statements of Matthew (3 : 6), "They were baptized of him IN the Jordan," and of Mark (1 : 5), "They were all baptized of him IN THE RIVER of Jordan," are often appealed to by our Baptist brethren as settling the question in favor of their theory. But suppose we admit that these are examples of undoubted immersion (as we would be willing to if we could honestly) — what then? We do not deny that immersion is one of the proper methods of baptism coming within the range of the term chosen by our Lord. Naaman's case shows that it is; but then the immersion of these persons in the river Jordan would not by any means prove that that was considered the only method of baptism. The meaning of the

word itself must settle that question. If that requires immersion, our Baptist brethren are right; if it does not, as I think has been plainly shown, they are mistaken. We do not object to their practicing immersion, as they prefer to do: we object to their claim that immersion is the only baptism. And if we should admit that these passages plainly describe immersion, it would not at all weaken our argument nor at all substantiate their claim. To make that claim good they must prove that no other method is allowable. *That* they can only do by showing that the word itself means nothing else.

LETTER XII.

IN your letter which has just come to hand you are kind enough to express yourself satisfied upon the various points which have thus far been discussed; and you send me a "list of passages to be expounded, and of arguments and objections of Baptist writers to be considered, in order to relieve your mind from the difficulties which deter you from a full acceptance of the views which are held by those who differ from them."

The first passage which you mention is Luke 12:50: "I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished." This passage is made much of by the Baptist writers. Especially do they quote with great confi-

dence Doddridge's paraphase of it: "I have, in the meantime, a most dreadful baptism to be baptized with, and know that I shall shortly, as it were, be bathed in blood and plunged in the most overwhelming distress."

I accept this paraphrase, and find no difficulty in harmonizing it with the view hitherto presented. In the first part of this correspondence attention was called to the fact that wherever the word *baptizo* is used *figuratively* in classical writings it is always IN A BAD SENSE. This example illustrates the same usage.

A passage in the Septuagint, to which reference was made, but the consideration of which was postponed, is equally in point. It is found in Is. 21:4: "Iniquity overwhelms me." Matt. 20:22, 23 and Mark 10:38, 39 belong to the same class. In all these passages the classical usage (where the word is employed figura-

tively) is retained. The literal sense has undergone a change — the word never being employed either in the Old Testament or the New to express literal immersion. But a figurative immersion in calamities, sufferings, or sins is expressed by it in the Bible just as in the classical writings. In its sacred or ecclesiastical sense it expresses the idea of ceremonial cleansing with water, and figuratively the idea of spiritual cleansing, of which the ceremonial was a type. Outside of that it is used in its classical sense.

And in this there is nothing inconsistent with the well-known laws of language. A word which has passed into a new sense does not necessarily lose its old one, but often retains it, both senses being carried along together for all subsequent time. Thus, for example, *bapto* means both "dip" and "dye." The same writers use it in both senses. Were one to be

called on to translate the sentence, "He dyed it red, by dipping it three times in blood," it would be perfectly proper to use the same word *bapto* in both parts of the sentence. *Pneuma* means both "wind" and "spirit," and may be used by the same author in both senses. Were you to translate this sentence into Greek, "The *wind* bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, nor whither it goeth; so is every one that is born of the *Spirit*," you would be entirely justified in using *pneuma* in both parts of the paragraph. Exactly this is what John does (see 3 : 8).

Various other examples might be given of a similar kind.

The facts, then, in respect to the use of *baptizo*, I understand to be these: —

(1) In classical literature its meaning (as well as we can express it in one word)

is "immerse," without reference to material or result.

(2) Its figurative meaning (corresponding to this) is "immerse" or "overwhelm," but *always in a bad sense.*

(3) Its secondary sense, found in the Septuagint, the New Testament, and the writings of the Jews and the Christian Fathers, is to cleanse ceremonially by water.

(4) This secondary sense is also used figuratively to express the idea of spiritual cleansing, as by the Holy Spirit and with fire.

The last three uses are found illustrated in the Bible ; the first never.

You are so well acquainted with the laws of language, from your teaching of the English, that you understand that it is entirely proper to speak of a "secondary" sense as "literal." Some have failed to distinguish between a secondary

meaning and a figurative meaning. Any word having both a primary and a secondary meaning may be used figuratively in either. For example, take *bapto*, meaning primarily to "dip" or "plunge," secondarily to "dye": it may be used figuratively in either of its senses. Thus we may say of a man that he is "plunged in iniquity," or that he is "dyed in iniquity." A secondary sense of a word is one thing; a figurative sense is another.

Another of the passages to which you invite my attention is John 3 : 5 : "Except a man be born of water, and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."

I am aware that this passage has been appealed to in defense of Baptist views. Indeed it would not be easy to enumerate the absurdities that have been imposed upon this verse. Out of its misinterpretation have grown baptismal regeneration and all sorts of fanciful analogies, exactly

suited to some of the centuries through which the Church has passed — such as the talk of being "born of the womb of the waters," and all that.

Now to my mind there is no more allusion to baptism in this verse than to the planet Mars or the French Revolution. It is simply *natural birth* that is here spoken of. Being "born of water" was without doubt a well-known form of speech which Christ used in that sense. Jesus said to Nicodemus: "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." Nicodemus replied: "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?"

And here I beg leave to vindicate Nicodemus against the imputations upon his common sense which are found in so many of the commentaries; and in like manner the annotators have done injus-

tice to the woman of Samaria, who appears in the next chapter. Christ used figurative language which both of these persons understood well to be figurative. We do, with all our Occidental dullness and unpoetical temperament. Much more did these Orientals, who are wont to talk in figures and dispute in figures on all subjects.

Nicodemus simply employs the same figure of speech that Christ does, and replies: "How can a man be born when he is old? He cannot enter a second time into his mother's womb, and be born — of course, I know that is not what you mean; explain a little farther."

Jesus answered: "Except a man be born naturally, AND ALSO SPIRITUALLY, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." "Born of water" in the first

part of the sentence and "born of the flesh" in the latter part (for it is but one paragraph) are evidently parallel and equivalent expressions. The latter is simply epexegetical of the former. Let the whole paragraph be read together, just as it will be found in any paragraph Bible, and the meaning is obvious: "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again."

Those who find any baptism here are compelled to find *three* births: "born of the flesh" (natural birth), "born of the water" (baptism), "born of the Spirit" (regeneration). According to this exegesis, Christ should have said to Nicodemus, not, "Ye must be born again," but, "Ye

must be born twice more ; as yet you have been born only of the flesh — hereafter you must be born of the water, and of the Spirit."

And why of the water first ; if it be baptism ? Is this Christ's way of putting things to one already steeped in ritualism ? Baptism first ? — the Holy Spirit afterwards ? So Alexander Campbell interpreted this passage. I wish that he had been the only one that had made the mistake of finding baptism here ; but with all due deference to the large number of them, there never was a more fanciful exegesis known to the Middle Ages. The reading of a single volume upon obstetrics — even had they been thus compelled to read one volume less on systematic theology — would have suggested to the commentators the true meaning of this passage, upon which so many of them have stumbled. On the

interpretation of this verse I will put the doctors of medicine against the doctors of divinity, and they will vote them down by an overwhelming majority and tell them that this expression was undoubtedly a well-known mode of speaking of natural birth and nothing else.

The next passage upon your list, of which you request an exposition, is 1 Cor. 15 : 29 : " Else what shall they do, who are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? Why are they then baptized for the dead?"

This must be admitted to be one of the most obscure passages in the Bible ; at least if we judge from the great variety of interpretations which it has received. I do not propose to refer to them all, but to three which are appealed to in favor of Baptist views. The first would paraphrase the words thus : " Why do we subject ourselves to all manner of sufferings

such as constantly overwhelm us in hope of the glory to come if there is for us no resurrection and so no glory to come?" The second thus: "Why are we overwhelmed in grief and buried in sorrow on behalf of the dead if there is for them no future life and all their pains and miseries have come to an end?" The third thus: "Why do we, by our baptism, represent resurrection as well as burial, if there be no resurrection?"

Of the first two interpretations, or any others, which in like manner make the baptism figurative, it is only necessary to say that in that case the passage is simply another example belonging to the same class with Luke 12:50, which has been already explained and shown to give no support to the Baptist view of the baptismal rite, etc.

Of the third interpretation it is, perhaps, enough to say that the words em-

ployed do not seem to be at all a natural method of expressing that idea, and that the verse which follows has no legitimate connection with any such allusion to the mode of baptism. If the paraphrase above is correct, why did not the apostle say, "Why, then, are we baptized for the resurrection?" instead of saying, "Why are we, then, baptized for the dead?" And the utter want of connection between the twenty-ninth and thirtieth verses is obvious. Substitute the paraphrase and the two verses read thus: "Why do we by our baptism represent resurrection; and why stand we in jeopardy every hour?" I see no connection, but everything disjointed.

To my mind there is in this passage no allusion to immersion, literal or figurative. Baptism is not spoken of with any reference to the mode of the ordinance, but simply with reference to the fact that it

was the outward profession of allegiance to Christ. A man began his Christian course by that profession. It cost him his life oftentimes to make it. Many lived but a few days after they had taken this oath of allegiance to their divine Lord. It was to be baptized to-day and die to-morrow. To put on Christ by baptism was to put on the robes of the dead. "Now if there be no resurrection of the dead," says Paul — "if there be for us no future life, what mean those among you who from time to time are baptized for the sake of being enrolled with the dead, as they know they will be immediately upon their professing Christ? Why are they, then, baptized for the dead? Why do they make any profession of faith in Christ at all? With such profession their life here ends, and there is no life hereafter. Why are they such madmen, and why are we all such madmen, who stand

in jeopardy every hour? Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most miserable. We lose this world and gain nothing beyond."

Such is my paraphrase of this verse and its connection, in which there appears no allusion to any mode of baptism; but only to the perils of a Christian profession such as baptism involved.

LETTER XIII.

QUOTE from your reply to my twelfth letter: "Your exposition of John 3 : 5 has interested me deeply, and although it was entirely new to me it carries upon its own face evidence that it is the true one. It makes the whole connection plain and obvious. I have read that part of your letter to two of my medical acquaintances, and they say they have no doubt that you have the right of it. I want to know how you got hold of it. Have any of the commentaries suggested it? and is there anything anywhere in the Bible to confirm such an interpretation? I ask both of these questions more out of curiosity than anything else; for it seems to me so manifestly true that it needs no confirmation."

Let me say: the interpretation was *not* evolved entirely out of my own consciousness. Some years ago I saw in the Comprehensive Commentary a quotation from some old commentator (whose name I have forgotten) of three or four lines, suggesting this interpretation. No argument was offered to maintain that view, but the suggestion struck me with so much force that I set myself to examining the matter, and was convinced of the soundness of the exposition; since then I have never had a doubt upon the subject.

As to your other inquiry, whether there is anywhere in the Bible anything to confirm that interpretation, I answer, I think there are two or three passages in the Old Testament which show that such a mode of speech would have been readily understood as referring to natural birth and nothing else. I quote but one of them,

Is. 48 : 1 : "Hear ye this, oh house of Jacob, which are called by the name of Israel, and ARE COME FORTH OUT OF THE WATERS OF JUDAH." The natural descendants of Judah are here spoken of without doubt.

But the arguments against referring the passage in John to baptism are too many to allow us to entertain for a moment *that* idea. One of them, that does not appear from our translation, is that the expression, "Except a man be born *again*," means properly "Except a man be born *from above*." This rendering you will find in the margin, and no other rendering should ever have been thought of. The Greek word which is found here is *anothen*, and means everywhere else "from above," and only that. Birth *from above* is simply *spiritual* birth, not ritual. Besides, baptism is nowhere else ever spoken of as a birth. And you will see that if it

is objected to my interpretation of the words, "born of water," that they are never used anywhere else, the same objection might be urged still more emphatically against the common interpretation. It is not strange that an expression of that sort, referring to natural birth, should be found but once; but if *baptism* is to be understood *as a new birth*, it is quite unaccountable that it should be thus spoken of only once, and that so blindly. And more than all is the intrinsically absurd teaching that there can be no salvation without baptism! For, if this expression refers to baptism at all, it is plainly taught that no one can enter into the kingdom of God who is not baptized. Words could not be more emphatic — "Except a man be born of water and the Spirit, HE CANNOT SEE THE KINGDOM OF GOD!" Being baptized, according to this interpretation, is just as absolutely required as to be born of the

Spirit. The more you look at the argument the plainer it will appear that the expression, "born of the water," cannot be interpreted as referring to anything but natural birth.

I come now to the consideration of the passage in the sixth of Romans, upon which so much stress is laid by our Baptist brethren in proof of immersion as the only baptism. The expression, "buried *through* baptism," found in Romans, and a similar expression, "buried *in* baptism," found in Colossians, are appealed to as though they were conclusive of the whole discussion. But I think that a close study of the passages will show that this is but an instance of what some of the old writers speak of as "an interpretation that *sticks in the bark.*"

That the matter may be before us in full, let me quote the entire passage in Romans. It embraces the first eleven

verses of the sixth chapter, and reads thus in the Revised Version : —

What shall we say then ? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. We who died to sin, how shall we any longer live therein? Or are ye ignorant that all we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him through baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we also might walk in newness of life. For if we have become united with him by the likeness of his death, we shall be also by the likeness of his resurrection; knowing this, that our old man was crucified with him, that the body of sin might be done away, that so we should no longer be in bondage to sin; for he that hath died is justified from sin. But if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him; knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death no more hath dominion over him. For the death that he died, he died unto sin once: but the life that he liveth, he liveth unto God. Even so reckon ye also yourselves to be dead unto sin, but alive unto God in Christ Jesus.

It is not necessary that I should enter into the exposition of every clause in this paragraph; but the key to the main thought that runs through it is obviously in the second sentence: "*How shall we who died to sin, live any longer therein?*" All that follows goes to enforce the idea of the utter inconsistency of a Christian profession with a continued living in sin. The very purpose for which Christ died was to put an end to the dominion of sin. Our consecration to him is a consecration to all that his death signified. We were crucified with him. We have become utterly dead and buried to the old life, and have been raised from the dead to a new life. This did our consecration to him (made in our baptism) signify. It is therefore utterly preposterous to talk of our continuance in sin "that grace may abound," or for any other reason.

The whole argument of the apostle

rests, not on *the mode* of the outward ordinance, but upon *the meaning* of it as the beginning of an entirely new life.

"Buried into death" (or "buried *to* death") is a peculiar form of expression which seems to be equivalent to our saying, "dead and buried"; that is, dead beyond any question.

As the discourse in Colossians is of substantially the same sort as in Romans, it is not necessary to repeat it. You will find it in the second chapter; but you will notice one slight difference in the form of words. Whereas in Romans it is "dead and buried," in Colossians it is simply "buried"; the burial implying the death. Just as often with us — we inquire after some old acquaintance, from whom we have heard no news of late, and the answer is: "He was buried three months ago." That tells the whole story as completely as the fuller form.

I call your attention in this connection to two other points: —

(1) That all argument for immersion, drawn from the word "buried," depends upon the conception of a *literal burial* in the waters of baptism. But when we bear in mind that the *death* spoken of in both of these passages is not literal death, but figurative; that the *crucifixion* spoken of is not literal, but figurative; that the *resurrection* in like manner is not literal, but figurative, — is it not a plain violation of every law of language to understand the *burial* alone as literal?

(2) To what seems to me to be a manifest belittling of the apostle's argument by the interpretation which the Baptist theory gives to it. I know full well that our Baptist brethren would not willingly lower the dignity of anything which the apostle says, but I cannot help the feeling that an appeal to the acknowledged *import*

of baptism as an act of entire consecration of soul, body, and spirit to the crucified yet ever-living Christ would be far more impressive than any reference to a mere external form. The latter would seem to me to be trivial as compared with the grandeur and majesty of the former. Am I not right? It was the *meaning* of their baptism and not the *mode* of it which the great apostle would burn into the souls of these Christians at Rome and at Colossæ.

You have requested in one of your letters that I should make it a little plainer, if possible, that the word *en*, which our Baptist brethren lay so much stress on as showing that immersion was implied by it, does not prove that fact. I may as well do that just now, at the close of this letter.

Of course I do not deny that *en* is more frequently translated "in" than by any other word. But as it is translated

"by" about a hundred and twenty times, and "with" almost exactly the same number of times, what is very plain is that no great stress can be laid upon it. It is also translated "through" more than forty times. I may give you a few examples to indicate the appropriateness of these translations. I scatter them along from Matthew to Revelation.

Matt. 5 : 34–36 : "Swear not at all, neither BY heaven, nor BY the earth, neither BY thy head."

Matt. 12 : 27, 28 : "If I, BY Beelzebub cast out devils, BY whom do your children cast them out? But if I cast out devils BY the Spirit of God," etc.

Luke 22 : 49 : "Shall we smite WITH the sword?"

1 Cor. 16 : 20 : "Salute one another WITH a holy kiss"; also, 2 Cor. 13 : 12.

Eph. 5 : 18 : "Be filled WITH the Spirit."

1 Thess. 4: 16: "The Lord shall descend WITH a shout, WITH the voice of the archangel; and WITH the trump of God."

Rev. 6: 8: "Power was given unto him to kill WITH sword, and WITH hunger, and WITH death."

Rev. 12: 5: "And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations WITH a rod of iron."

It is obvious that no judicious translator would think of using "in" to convey the idea in any of these cases to an English reader. All the dictionaries accordingly recognize the fact that this preposition is used to express the instrument or means by, with, or through which an action is wrought. The Englishman's Greek Concordance, of which I have spoken before, will give you no less than two hundred and eighty examples of the same sort as above in the New Testament.

LETTER XIV.

TWO or three other passages of Scripture remain to be considered to complete your list. The first of them is that in Acts 22:16: "Arise and be baptized, and wash away thy sins." This is one of several in which we find baptism closely connected with this same word, "wash." Thus the Epistle to the Hebrews evidently refers to baptism in the expression, "Having our bodies washed with pure water." Other similar allusions will occur to you. That these forms of speech show that baptism was understood to be a symbol of purity, and not of death and resurrection, seems too obvious to need argument. And yet, as every reader of Baptist literature knows full well, the staple arguments on that side

are these two: (1) The meaning of the word itself. (2) The import of the ordinance as representing Christ's burial and resurrection. The proof of the latter view is drawn solely from the figurative language found in Romans and Colossians, which we have already sufficiently considered.

But if the ordinance was intended to represent Christ's burial and resurrection, — if that is its spiritual significance and import, — it seems strange to us that there should be no more frequent, and at least some plain references to that fact; strange that so important a matter should be left in such obscurity. Why was it not said to Paul, for example: "Arise and be baptized, and so represent the burial resurrection of your risen Lord?" It would have been a very proper occasion for it: there never could have been one apparently more fitting. The risen Christ, whom living he had rejected, had just appeared

to him: and if Christ's burial and resurrection had indeed been the meaning of the ordinance to which he was called to submit, it would have seemed exceedingly natural to bring out that fact distinctly. Or if, instead of that, nothing had been said, it might have been so understood. But we have neither this interpretation on the one hand, nor silence on the other; but on the contrary we have another and different interpretation entirely. "Be baptized; and thus represent in symbol, the cleansing of the soul — by the washing of regeneration."

Why did not Paul, in writing to the Galatians, when it came directly in his way to set forth the import of their baptism, say: "As many of you as have been baptized to Jesus Christ have thus represented Christ's burial and resurrection" — instead of telling them that they had thus put on Christ?

Even in the sixth of Romans the direct reference is to their death and resurrection to a new life, while only an indirect reference to the burial and resurrection of Christ is made at all.

Then comes the passage in Acts 1 : 5 : "John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days hence." All Baptist writers, so far as I know, attempt to bring even this verse to their aid. But the attempt strikes me as a signal failure. In baptism we are consecrated to the divine service. Water represents the purity which this consecration implies. But the divine power which really consecrates and sanctifies is the Spirit of God. John's cleansing was with water; but yours shall be with the Holy Spirit, not many days hence.

Dr. Carson fairly represents all the Baptist writers, as far as I know, when he

talks about the baptism of the disciples "in wind and fire"; and when he says that "the house was filled with the wind, that the disciples might be baptized in it. Their baptism consisted in being totally surrounded with the wind." And then, a little farther on he says: "They were surrounded by the wind, and covered by the fire above. They were, therefore, buried in wind and fire."[1]

And so he vacillates: on one page, finding them baptized "in wind and fire"; on the next in the wind alone; on the next again, in both combined. I am not surprised that he should walk thus unsteadily; it is more surprising that so acute a critic should have found even a single foothold for immersion in the passage to which he refers. For it is not said at all that there was any wind whatever; but only a SOUND, AS of a rushing

[1] Carson on Baptism, pp. 109–111.

mighty wind. It was not the rushing mighty wind that filled the house — but the sound. And the tongues were not fire, but simply had the appearance of fire.

Dr. Carson, however, is not to be discomfited by any little difficulties of this sort; for "The baptism of the Spirit must have reference to immersion, and in its literal sense never signifies anything else.[1] This is a fixed point; and in the examination of the reference in the baptism of the Spirit, nothing can be admitted inconsistent with this." And so he is even ready to say: "On the day of Pentecost there was a real baptism in the emblems of the Spirit. They were literally covered with the appearance of wind and fire."

Here is still another mode of baptism — "in the appearance of wind and fire!"

[1] Ibid. p. 105.

What can that mean? — "the APPEARANCE of wind?" — "baptized in the appearance of wind?" The matter is growing more and more complicated! Now if the sacred historian had stated that the wind filled the house, that would have provided for immersion in that — without the fire at all. But as it is only stated that the SOUND filled the house, and that the sound was LIKE that of a mighty rushing wind, the wind itself is wanting. Dr. Carson seems to have caught a glimpse of that fact at one moment, and hence was reduced to the necessity of baptizing the disciples in THE APPEARANCE OF WIND (whatever that may be). Why did he not happen to catch at the real statement, that the *sound* filled the house, and then he could have immersed them in that? But immersion "in a sound" would have been too thin a disguise, and so he has it "in the appear-

ance of wind and fire!"—a phrase so well-sounding and at the same time so obscure that even the learned author probably never himself detected the absurdity of it.

Understanding the baptism of the Spirit to mean the sanctifying power which should set them apart to their great work (as our baptism always represents sanctification and consecration), all difficulties disappear. To my mind it is equally a misconception to imagine in this baptism of the Spirit any argument for "pour" or "sprinkle" or "immerse." It is not the mode of baptism, but the cleansing and consecration which it signifies, that this figurative use of the word brings before us.

There remains, I believe, but one passage that has ever entered into this controversy, to which I have not thus far alluded. It is found in 1 Peter 3 : 20, 21 :

"The longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls, were saved by water; the like figure whereunto, even baptism, doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ."

The only interpretation by which this passage is made to do service to the doctrine of immersion is that which makes the ark a figure of baptism; and as that was surrounded by the waters so are we in our immersion, "the like figure whereunto" making baptism like the ark.

Various reasons might be suggested against this interpretation; but there is one which is utterly fatal to it, and so it is enough to mention that. The reader of the Greek Testament will tell you that the words which are translated "the like

figure whereunto" are literally rendered "the antitype to which," and that the word translated "to which" cannot possibly find its antecedent in the word translated "ark"; because the gender of the noun is not the same as that of the pronoun. The. true antecedent is "water" and not "ark." The apostle simply alludes to water baptism as a ceremony of cleansing, finding its type in the water which cleansed the old world, and through which Noah and his household were saved; taking care to guard his readers against any ritualistic interpretation of his allusion, by saying explicitly that it is not because the ceremony itself really cleanses from the filth of the flesh, but because it fulfills the requirement of a good conscience, in obeying God; Christ, through the power of his resurrection, being our only true Saviour.

You called my attention some time ago

to the argument so much relied upon by those holding to immersion only, based upon the "localities where baptism is spoken of as having occurred." Why did John choose the Jordan unless for immersion? Why did he baptize at Ænon, because of the abundance of water found there, unless it was for the purpose of immersion? (This is not relied upon as their chief argument, but as confirmatory of that; the chief appeal being to the meaning of the word itself.)

The study of the passage relating to Ænon we have already gone through with: it will not be necessary to go over that. When we consider how imperative must have been the demand for an abundant supply of water to accommodate the immense throngs that attended John, independent of the simple rite of baptism, it is easy to see that there is little force in the argument which is based upon the

water supply. The other needs, even admitting immersion, would have been many fold greater.

But the appeal to the places where baptism is spoken of is otherwise unfortunate: for when *all* of the places are taken into the account it will be noticed that in these two alone is there any special supply of water at all indicated.

In Jerusalem, at the Pentecost, when three thousand were baptized in a single day, no special reference is had to any body of water where immersion could have been performed; and, as we have already seen, there was no such body of water in or near Jerusalem, except the pools which furnished the drinking water for the city.

Next comes the case of Philip and the eunuch. They were riding through the country and came to a certain water. The eunuch said: "See, here is water. What doth hinder me to be baptized?"

Nothing is said of the quantity of it; it was a running stream — such "living water" as is always required by the Jewish law for their purifyings. There is nothing in the account which implies necessarily that the baptism was by immersion.

Paul's baptism is the next instance spoken of. Read the whole account as found in the ninth chapter of Acts. Paul was in the house of one Judas, at Damascus. Ananias came to him, by divine direction; laid his hands upon him; "and immediately there fell from his eyes, as it were scales, and he received sight forthwith, and he arose, and was baptized." Literally, "standing up, he was baptized." That is the whole story; no allusion to his leaving the house or returning to it. Now, remembering what has been demonstrated, that the word "baptized" had been for centuries used by the Jews to express ceremonial cleansing, whether by

immersion, pouring, or sprinkling, it is far more natural to find here sprinkling than immersion. There was plenty of "living water" at Damascus; it was easy to bring it in, and have it applied to the man as he stood, and no necessity of supposing him to repair to the river for baptism. Certainly it must be admitted that there is here no argument from the "*localities* in speaking of baptism" in favor of the theory of immersion.

Then comes the preaching of Peter at Cæsarea. The Holy Spirit fell on them that heard the word. And Peter said: "Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord." Does that sound at all like a Baptist baptism? No allusion to their leaving the house of Cornelius, in which Peter had preached, nor to their return. And the expression, "Can any

man forbid water?" sounds very much as though the water were to be brought — not as though they were to repair to the seaside for the ordinance.

Then we have the baptism of Lydia and her household. In this case the meeting was by the riverside, "where prayer was wont to be made." Here Paul preached to those who were gathered together. Lydia and her household were baptized; and she invited the preacher to go and abide with them. The location was not unfavorable to immersion; but there is no indication of her first returning to the city to provide herself and her household with any change of dress for that purpose — no indication of delay, such as all this would have required; and the simple, natural interpretation would preclude any such supposition, *when once we have it distinctly in mind that the word does not require immersion.*

The baptism of the jailer we have already considered. The "location" is certainly no argument in favor of immersion in this case.

In general I think we are justified in saying that the argument from the localities in which the ordinance was administered is very decidedly and strongly against the theory that it was generally by immersion: and well-nigh irresistible against the supposition that it was always so.

I come now to consider the argument which Baptist writers present to show that the early Christian Fathers believed, and practiced, and taught only immersion, and that, therefore, that is the true apostolic mode of baptism.

As preliminary to the investigation of the facts, I wish to say two things: (1) That it does not amount to much in any case — as all must agree. Whatever men

said or did or thought in the second or third or fourth century of the Christian era has no binding authority upon any Protestant Christian. "To the law, and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." The question is, and the only important question, what does the law of baptism require, interpreted according to the sense in which the lawgiver employed the words used? That question we have endeavored to answer, and we think it has been proved beyond all dispute that the word *baptizo* was understood as a general term, meaning to purify or cleanse, and not as a word of mode at all.

So that, whatever we find that the Fathers understood by it makes little difference. We are as competent to interpret the Bible in the nineteenth century as they of the second or third.

(2) It will be admitted that the Fathers

did not, by any means, agree in their teachings upon this subject any more than upon many others. This fact alone sets aside all appeal to them as *any authority.* They taught and practiced various errors, as we and our Baptist brethren would all alike maintain.

But when, in the argument upon this subject, they insist that the testimony of these early centuries is in their favor, and against the view which I have maintained in these letters, although I do not regard the matter as one of any great consequence whether it is or not, I am compelled by a regard to historic truth to deny their claim; and I think the denial can be supported by the most ample proof.

All but one of the passages which I shall here quote I have taken from a publication of the Bible Union, intended to vindicate their rendering of *baptizo* by

"immerse." And in all these passages they so translate. But whether such a translation accords best with the context, you will be able to judge for yourself.

I quote them to show that the writers understood baptism to express and symbolize purification and nothing else; and, while it is admitted that immersion was the general mode in which they baptized, these extracts from their writings make it evident that it was not because they understood the command so to require, but because that was their chosen method of purification. So some of them immersed three times, the more thoroughly to symbolize the purification which they understood the ordinance to express.

I place these quotations in the order of time as nearly as I can. The first is from Justin Martyr, born about the close of the first century. He says: "Through the washing of repentance and the knowledge

of God, which has been instituted for the benefit of God's people, we believed and we make known that BAPTISM which he proclaimed, which alone is able to CLEANSE those who repent. . . . For what is the benefit of that CLEANSING [baptism] which makes bright the flesh and the body only? Be purified [BAPTIZED] as to the soul from anger and from covetousness, from envy, from hatred; and behold the body is *pure*." Gr., *katharon*.[1]

Few of these quotations will need any word of comment to vindicate my translation of *baptizo*. This certainly not.

Hippolytus, about the year A.D. 200, after quoting Is. 1:16–19 ("Wash you, make you clean . . . though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow"), says: "Thou sawest, beloved, how the prophet foretold the *cleansing* of the holy BAPTISM. For he who goes down with

[1] Dialogue with a Jew, XIV.

faith into the washing of regeneration is arrayed against the evil one, and on the side of Christ; he denies the enemy, and confesses Christ to be God; he puts off bondage, and puts on Sonship; he comes up from his BAPTISM bright as the sun, flashing forth the rays of righteousness." Certainly this preacher understood his baptism to mean cleansing, not burial.

Cyprian, about A.D. 250, in answer to a question that had been proposed to him as to the validity of baptism performed without immersion during sickness, says: "You inquire what I think of such as obtain the grace in time of their sickness and infirmity — whether they are to be accounted lawful Christians because they are not washed all over with the water of salvation but have only some of it poured upon them. In which matter I would use so much modesty and humility as not to

prescribe so positively but that every one should have the freedom of his own thoughts and do as he thinks best. I do, according to the best of my humble capacity, judge thus: that the divine favors are not maimed or weakened, because these sick people, when they receive the grace of our Lord, have nothing but an affusion or sprinkling; when as the Holy Scriptures, by the prophet Ezekiel says: 'Then will I *sprinkle* clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean.' And let not such, if they recover of their sickness, think it needful that they should be baptized again. For in baptism the pollution of sin is not washed away as the pollution of the body is washed away, in an external physical bath: so that there is need of nitre and a bath, or a pool, in which the body can be washed and purified. Far otherwise is the heart of the believer washed; far otherwise is the mind of a

man purified from sin, through the merit of faith."

There is no hint here that baptism represented death and resurrection. It was understood to mean cleansing, hence immersion in water was preferred, when practicable, to represent it more completely. But each one was to judge for himself, understanding always that immersion is not essential. No claim whatever is set up in this letter of the bishop that the word meant immerse. On the contrary, he distinctly recognizes that the man who had been sprinkled had been baptized, though not in the most approved way, as he conceived. You notice that he says distinctly that such are "not to be baptized *again*," implying that they had been already baptized once. No Baptist minister of my acquaintance would write such a letter as this; or, if he did, it would be a virtual surrender

of his doctrine that only immersion is baptism.

I quote Cyprian as a fair sample of the immersionists of his day; and his view of the matter plainly does not at all sustain the theory of the practice of our Baptist brethren of this day.

Athanasius, about A.D. 328, says: "It is proper to know that in like manner with baptism the fountain of tears cleanses man. Wherefore many who have defiled the holy *baptism* by offences have been cleansed by tears and declared just. . . . *Three baptisms*, purgative of all sin whatever, God has bestowed on the nature of men. I mean that of water, and again that by the witness of one's own blood; and thirdly, that by tears, in which also the harlot was cleansed."[1]

It takes some boldness to translate "*baptisms*" here by "*immersions*"; but

[1] Question LXXII.

Dr. Conant has the requisite nerve! A plainer case to prove that the word means "cleansings," and not "immersions," it would be difficult to conceive. Is a martyr "immersed" in his blood or a harlot in her tears? Yet both are here called "baptisms," showing beyond all question that Athanasius did not understand the word to mean immersion. The whole sentence makes it evident that he did understand it to mean cleansing, or purification.

Chrysostom, about A.D. 350, speaking of the words of Christ, "Can ye drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and be baptized with the baptism that I shall be baptized with," says: "Here calling his cross and death a cup and a baptism: a cup, because he drank it with pleasure; a *baptism*, because by it he *cleansed* the world."

The same writer, in his discourse on

St. Lucian, the martyr, says: "Wonder not if I call the martyrdom a baptism. For here also the Spirit hovers over with great fullness, and there is a taking away of sins, and a cleansing of the soul wonderful and strange; and as the baptized are cleansed by water, so are the martyrs by their own blood."

Basil the Great, A.D. 350, says: "The Lord dwells in the flood. A flood is an inundation of water, concealing all that lies beneath, and cleansing all that was before polluted. The grace of baptism he calls a flood, so that the soul, washed from sins, and cleansed from the old man, is henceforth fitted for a habitation of God in the spirit."[1]

Cyril, Archbishop of Alexandria, A.D. 412. I quote three paragraphs:—

The first is from his commentary on Is. 4:4. Explaining the words, "spirit

[1] Discourse on Psalm 29: 3.

of burning," he says: "The spirit of burning we call the grace in the holy baptism, produced in us, not without the Spirit. For we have been baptized, not with mere water; but neither with the ashes of a heifer have we been sprinkled, for the cleansing of the flesh alone, as says the blessed Paul; but with the Holy Spirit, and a fire that is divine, and mentally discerned, destroying the filth of the vileness in us, and consuming away the pollution of sin."

With this paraphrase may be compared the following from Book XII of his treatise on worship: "For we are baptized, not in fire perceptible by the senses, but in the Holy Spirit, like fire, consuming away the pollutions in souls."

The same writer, commenting on John 19:34, says: "With a spear they pierce his side, and it poured forth blood mixed with water; as though God for us made

that which was done an image and a kind of firstfruits of the mystic blessing, and of the holy baptism: for Christ's verily, and from Christ, is the holy baptism, and the virtue of the mystic blessing arose for us out of the holy flesh."

The allusion, as Dr. Conant admits, is to the two elements of atonement and cleansing, blood and water, by which we are purified in fact and in symbol, and which our baptism represents.

John of Damascus, A.D. 700, on "Faith and Baptism," says: "From the beginning the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters; and of old the Scripture testifies to water, that it is cleansing. . . . In Noah's age God deluged the world by water. By water every one unclean, according to the law, is cleansed, even the garments themselves being washed by water. . . . And almost all things according to the law are cleansed by water. . . .

Christ is baptized, not as himself needing cleansing, but that he may whelm sin and bury the old Adam in the water."

This writer, while being a strong immersionist, nevertheless conceives of the ordinance as representing and typifying cleansing and nothing else.

Theophylact, A.D. 1070, commenting on John 5 : 1–4, giving the story of Bethesda, says : "For since a baptism was to be given, having much efficacy, and quickening souls, God prefigures the baptism in the Jewish rites ; and gives them also water, cleansing away pollutions, not properly being, but accounted such, — such as those from the touching of a dead body. or of a leper, or other such like things."

Understanding baptism to mean purification or ceremonial cleansing by water, this sentence is every way intelligible. But understanding it to mean immersion, it is every way unintelligible. For, as we

have seen, there were no immersions required under the Jewish law to prefigure immersion under the Christian Dispensation, but an abundance of ceremonial cleansings by water. Moreover a discourse upon immersion would be entirely out of place in a comment upon the healing at Bethesda, a pool in which there was no place for immersion; and still more, the cleansings to which he particularly refers were chiefly by sprinkling. It is evident that it is the use of water for ceremonial cleansing under the two Dispensations alike to which Theophylact makes allusion.

LETTER XV.

TO the quotations from the Christian Fathers, given in my last letter, I might add many more to the same effect. But these are sufficient. I have confined myself to these, because, with the exception of Cyprian's letter (which Dr. Conant would very naturally not feel inclined to quote, to prove that *baptizo* should always be translated "immerse"), they are all copied from the volume to which I have referred, on "The meaning and use of *baptizo*" — published by the Baptist Union. The genuineness of the quotations will not, therefore, be questioned.

Whether "immerse" is, in any one of them, the proper translation, you, or any other intelligent reader, — whether ac-

quainted with the Greek or not, — will be entirely competent to judge.

In no one of these passages do I find any indication that the writers regarded baptism as a symbol of death and resurrection; but, on the contrary, as meaning something entirely different. Where immersion is alluded to, it is only spoken of, not as required by the meaning of the word, but as an approved — or the most approved—method of ceremonial cleansing or purification. "The baptism of tears" is purification by tears. "The baptism of blood" is purification by blood. "The baptism of fire," even, is purification by fire. "The baptism of the Holy Spirit" is inward purity through the divine power.

Whether they were right or wrong in these interpretations is not now the question. We may not be able, for example, to accept their exegesis of "the baptism of fire." I do not find any evidence that

this form of speech is ever applied except to a *company* of persons. It is employed only by John the Baptist; and in each case it is followed by a sentence that seems to be clearly explanatory of it. For example, in Luke 3:16, 17: "I, indeed, baptize you with water; but one cometh after me, mightier than I; he shall baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire; whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly cleanse his floor, and will gather the wheat into his garner; but the chaff he will burn with fire unquenchable." This seems to me plainly to mean — some of you will be saved; some of you will perish. The nation will be purified in both ways. *Individuals* are never spoken of as being baptized, or purified by fire. So that there is not a shadow of justification for any purgatorial interpretation of these passages.

And their interpretation of the Saviour's

words, "I have a baptism to be baptized with," making it a baptism (or purification) by blood, I do not adopt.

But the quotations show beyond reasonable dispute that the writers understood baptism, not to require immersion, but to mean cleansing; and that is the point involved in this discussion. Admitting the claim of our Baptist brethren that immersion was generally practiced in the early centuries (succeeding the first) does not, by any means, make out their case. The important question is: On what ground did they put it? Did the Fathers maintain that the word *baptizo* so commanded? If they did, the fact would be something to the point; for it might be said, with a good deal of plausibility, that they probably understood the meaning of the particular words of the New Testament Greek as well, at least, as we.

Dr. Conant quotes sixty-one passages in

his book. They are undoubtedly the strongest on the Baptist side that could be found. Much learning and labor have been expended upon this examination of the writings of the Fathers. Many men, on both sides of the Atlantic, have labored to strengthen the Baptist argument on this point: and we have the result, as compiled by Dr. Conant. Upon examining these sixty-one quotations, I have not found even so much as one of them that rests the claim for immersion on any such ground. Several of them refer to Rom. vi and Col. ii; but we are as competent to interpret these passages as they. If they understood the word itself as requiring immersion, it is strange that they did not say so. This is the ground on which our modern Baptists place the matter; and it is manifestly the only ground upon which it can rest firmly. If the word requires immersion, that settles the question; if it

does not, that settles it. The Baptist Union regard this as so important that they for a long time carried on a separate Bible Society on purpose to see to it that this word was so translated into all languages. They annually expended many thousands of dollars with a view of giving all English readers a Bible with "immerse" in it instead of "baptize." And if that is the equivalent expression for the original *baptizo*, then it should be so translated.

But, by the way, if the Latin Fathers did really concur in this understanding of the subject, why did they, with one consent, transfer the Greek word to the Latin text instead of translating by "immerse"? And if there was even a minority of them opposed to the transfer and in favor of a translation, why do we hear nothing from them? From our Baptist brethren of these days we have been hearing this complaint against our

English version perpetually all our lifetime. If the Latin writers understood immersion to be a synonym of baptism, why did not they adopt it? For immersion, as we all know, is itself a Latin word, and the very one which these brethren are quoting the Latin Fathers to prove ought to be used in the translation of the New Testament Greek. Yet these same Latin Fathers themselves, with one consent, reject their own native-born "*immersio*," and transfer the Greek *baptismos!* It is very much to be regretted that they so poorly understood the meaning of their own language or of the Greek!

It seems to me very clear, then, that an appeal to the Fathers of the first ten centuries subsequent to the Apostolic Age is against the Baptist theory and not in favor of it.

These letters are drawing to a close. I believe that I have answered every ques-

tion that you have propounded. But as you desired me to give you in full the reasons which led to my change of views and of church relations, I ought to say a few words more, before I lay down my pen, or "sum up" the case, as the lawyers say, in conclusion.

The one other thing which I wish to say is that the views which I have here presented — the interpretation which I have contended for in these letters — seem to me to commend themselves to a sound Christian judgment as altogether fitting to the obvious nature and design of the ordinance of baptism and as harmonizing with the manifest spirit of our Christian religion.

Upon a matter like this I am fully aware that it becomes us to speak very discreetly. For we must always be careful not to sit in judgment upon the wisdom or fitness of any divine ordinance or appointment, lest

we be found among those who accuse God foolishly.

But we cannot help *thinking*. And when it is a question of intrepretation, and when philology does not speak plainly and unequivocally, we may very properly throw these thoughts into the scale. To my own mind the philological argument presented in these pages is clear and unanswerable. But to others it may not prove so. It may simply leave them unsettled and balancing in doubt. Any one who occupies that position may very properly allow his sense of fitness to lead him to reject an interpretation which is not sustained by unanswerable proofs.

Some years ago, while I was still in the Baptist ministry, but after I had ceased to preach on baptism and in my own mind had ceased to insist on immersion, I met a Baptist clergyman, who was an entire stranger to my own thoughts, and who said

to me: "Has it never occurred to you that the Great Head of the church, in establishing an ordinance for all time and for all latitudes and for all seasons of the year, would not be likely to give the church one that is so utterly unphysiological as immersion? Now, I have studied medicine, and practiced as a physician fifteen years and I know that what I say is true — it is contrary to all the laws of life and health either for the baptized, or for the administrator."

I was at first quite startled to hear such words from a Baptist minister; but after a moment I confessed to him my own thoughts, and my own experience. For on several occasions, I had been ill for days after baptizing a large number of persons in the spring — following a winter of special revival.

Here is an ordinance for the world; for missionaries in all countries; for every

convert, immediately upon his conversion; and one would naturally anticipate that it would be one to which he could give heed at any time of year, or in any locality where he might be. But, if our Baptist brethren have the right understanding of it, it is not. Many, I think most, Baptist ministers are obliged, from regard to their own life and health, as well as out of regard to the health of some of those converted to Christ, to postpone the baptism of those converted in winter until the coming of the spring or summer. Ministers in impaired health are not able to attend to it at all.

I was present in Spurgeon's church in the summer of 1873, on the occasion of the baptism of ten or twelve persons. The pastor preached every Sabbath. He was present, and as well as usual, at the time of this baptism. But another minister performed the ceremony: and I was

informed by a member of the church that the reason Mr. Spurgeon himself did not perform the ceremony was that his health would not justify him in doing it. Certainly his friend was not selected because of his special skill: for I have never seen immersion more ungracefully executed.

To me it seems an ungracious task to argue in favor of a ceremony of admission to a Christian church which the pastor of the church must get somebody else to perform.

So it might often happen that, in a large district of country, there would be found no facilities for immersion.

In the spring of 1864 I spent a month in traveling in Palestine. I was then a Baptist, and always expected to remain so. I did not travel out of my way to find water for baptism: but, as it was the month of March, and as the "latter rain" had just ceased, it would be a favorable

time for finding suitable conveniences for immersion, if such there were. Yet, aside from the Mediterranean and the Sea of Galilee, I found only one or two places where immersion would have been practicable. It was not oftener than once in four days, on the average, that we could have baptized the eunuch, in that method, had we fallen in with him and had he so required.

And the Jordan was not one of these places. As we stood upon the banks of the furious, foaming, dashing river, and the words, "What will ye do in the swellings thereof?" naturally occurred to me, I replied inwardly, "I do not know: but certainly not undertake to baptize anybody by immersion, unless I wished literally to bury him by baptism into death." I would as soon have thought of performing immersion in the Niagara, half a mile above the cataract, as at the Fords

of the Jordan, in the month of March, 1864. And in many other countries and localities it would be far more difficult to find facilities for immersion than in Palestine. Even in countries which are regarded as well-watered, it is not always easy.

I once had a little experience in this matter in my own pastoral work. Two persons wished to be baptized by immersion. It was June. A brook of some considerable size flowed through the town; but after diligent search for several hours we did not find any place within three miles where the water was of sufficient depth. We then determined to borrow the use of a baptistery, presuming that we could do so without difficulty, as there were two Baptist churches in the city. The authorities of both of them readily consented, but neither of the baptisteries was in order and neither of

them could be repaired and filled without considerable expense and delay. We might have secured the use of a private bath, but none that was at all suitable in size; and, besides, the use of such a bath did not seem to us to be in harmony with the idea of a public consecration such as the ordinance implies. So we gave up the search; and as we were then engaged in building a new place of worship, and as we believed immersion to be valid baptism, and that this is one of those things in which every person should be fully persuaded in his own mind, we determined upon putting a baptistery into our own church. We did so; and after waiting a year the parties referred to were immersed. It was true, for several years after that, that our Congregational baptistery was the only place in that city of twelve thousand where immersion could be performed without special preparation,

considerable delay, and no little expense. There are not a few other communities in which this mode of baptism would be found equally impracticable and inconvenient.

Onerous rites and burdensome ceremonies do not seem at all to accord with the genius and spirit of our Christian faith. Our understanding of baptism makes it a ceremony which every disciple may observe and every pastor may perform — suitable for every assembly of believers, in every clime, and at every season.

And as a little bread may represent to us the strength which Christ alone can impart, and a little wine may typify his blood shed for us, so may a little water in its purity symbolize to us the cleansing power of God's Spirit and grace.

He who had the water of separation sprinkled upon him was touched by that water in only a few spots ; but he was not

"cleansed in spots"!—the cleansing was entire and complete. And those to whom the prophetic promise comes, declaring "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean," are assured that they are thus (in symbol) "cleansed from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God."

The mode in which the water of baptism shall be applied is not prescribed any more than the mode of eating the bread in the Lord's Supper; both are left to our own freedom. But when, under the Dispensation of Moses, cleansing was to be symbolized, it was, as we have seen, chiefly by sprinkling—never by immersion. And for various reasons we prefer this mode of baptism. But we would not insist upon it for anybody else. The command is not to "sprinkle," nor to "pour upon," nor to "immerse," but to "baptize." Were we obliged to employ any

other word than this in our English version, it would be difficult to decide as between "cleanse" and "purify." But our translators did wisely in following the example of the Latin versionists for fifteen hundred years in transferring the word for which we had no exact English equivalent and thus giving us a sacred term forever consecrated to the sacred ordinance.

That, in this use of it, it is a general term, expressive of symbolic cleansing with water, and not a specific term, requiring immersion, I have endeavored to show you on various grounds: —

1. Because such a modification of meaning is common to many of the Greek words which are used in the New Testament and harmonizes with all the well-known laws of language.

2. The command to baptize cannot be understood in the classic sense of *baptizo*,

which involves no necessary thought of water at all — this being, however, an essential thing in the Christian ordinance.

3. The Septuagint use of the word proves conclusively that long before the time of Christ *baptizo* had come to express to the Jewish nations the general idea of water cleansing without reference to the mode of its application, and especially, and beyond all possible question, when the mode was by sprinkling alone.

4. This meaning best harmonizes with all the various cases of the administration of the ordinance recorded in the New Testament.

5. It is absolutely demanded by the exigencies of several passages in which *baptizo* is used in reference to other religious purifications.

6. It harmonizes best with all the regimen of the verb and with the various prepositions used in connection with it.

7. So, also, it best accords with the different allusions to the ordinance, such as the "washing of regeneration," and especially with all references to its spiritual import.

8. The figurative use of the term, in speaking of the "baptism of the Holy Spirit, and of fire," demands this interpretation.

9. There is no passage in which the word is found that may not be explained in harmony with this interpretation, while many of them are quite difficult of explanation upon any other.

10. The teachings of the Christian Fathers, even of those who preferred immersion, plainly show that they regarded the ordinance as one symbolic of cleansing and not of burial and resurrection.

11. This interpretation renders it possible, as the other does not, to fulfill the

Great Commission in all countries, in all places, and at all times.

12. It best harmonizes with the whole genius and spirit of Christianity, which is preëminently a religion of heart and life, and not of onerous rites and outward ceremonies.

Such is the view to which I was irresistibly led by a reëxamination of the whole subject, commenced, and for a long time prosecuted, for the purpose and with the confident expectation in the beginning of triumphantly vindicating my belief as a Baptist.

I have not, during these years of reinvestigation, read a single volume on the pædobaptist side, and never in my life more than one or two. Perhaps if I had I might have made the argument stronger still. But I have preferred to reëxamine the whole subject independently; and that reëxamination convinced me of my

mistake in holding that immersion was the only baptism. I could not do otherwise than yield to the unconquerable force of the argument against me.

Only those who have gone through with it can understand how much of a trial it is to sunder denominational connections after they have been long and pleasantly maintained. But to continue them when a change of opinion has intervened upon the very doctrines that divide is ordinarily an occasion of chafing and strife, which are more to be deplored than friendly separation. And with all due respect for old and long-cherished friends one cannot honestly continue to profess to believe what he does not any longer really believe. Allegiance to what one sees to be true must be supreme. You remember the saying of one of old: "Plato is my friend, Socrates is my friend, but much more is the truth my friend."

Parted by differences of sentiment here, we wait for the fuller reunion in the home above where there will be but one Lord, one faith, and the one baptism of light and love, whereby we are all baptized by one Spirit into the one body of Christ.

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